

Robert H. N. Ho N. Ho In the second of the



Before you can receive, you must learn how to give.





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Preface

Mr Robert Hung Ngai Ho is the son of General Robert Ho Shai-lai and Hesta Hung, and grandson of renowned Hong Kong businessman and international figure Sir Robert Ho Tung.

Now in his eighties, Robert H. N. has lived in affluence and poverty, experienced war and peace, and always sought to speak truth to people in power, both in his work as a journalist and as a man. He has forsaken and later returned to the faith of Buddhism. As a philanthropist, he has listened and learned, determined not just to write cheques but to proactively engage in philanthropic activities. Through establishment of and participation in a family foundation and individual giving, he has supported education and cultural activities, heritage and healthcare, and greater integration of Buddhism in today's world.

He has always kept in mind all these endeavours and encounters in past decades and the following words of his grandfather: "Before you can receive, you must learn how to give."

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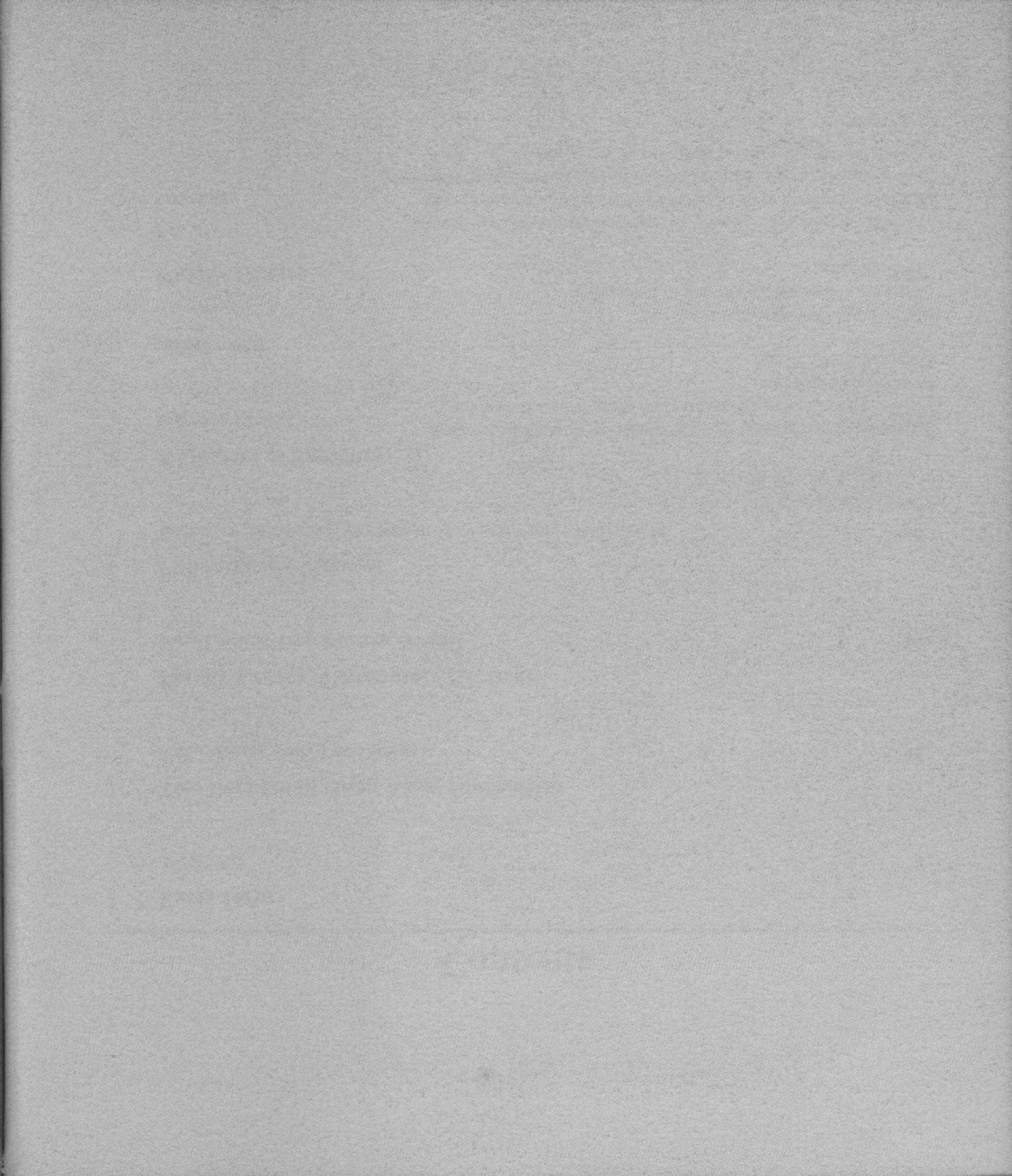
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Chapter 1 −×≫≪≫-

Early Days 1932-1962

Early Days 1932-1962

Robert Hung Ngai Ho (Robert H. N.) was born in 1932 in Hong Kong in a time of raging divisions within the Chinese society. China was seething with internal conflicts between Nationalist and Communist forces. Japan had annexed Manchuria in the country's northeast in 1931 and threatened further incursion. If not exactly serene, Hong Kong remained a more stable area in comparison.

Frontline family

The Ho family was one of the most influential families in Hong Kong, then a British-administered territory, with connections that stretched into many areas of China and the West. Unconventionally for a member of an affluent Hong Kong family, Robert H. N.'s father, Robert Ho Shai-lai (Robert S. L.), had become an army officer in China, aligned with the Nationalists. Even more unusual, Robert S. L. was a western-trained artillery specialist, who had studied at renowned military academies in the UK and France and, soon after Robert H. N. was born, went to the US for further training.

Robert H. N.'s grandfather was self-made Eurasian business tycoon Sir Robert Ho Tung. He was about to turn 70 and yet he still had his finger firmly on the pulse of most of the significant corporate sectors and political events of the day. Sir Robert's influence was exercised through directorships, property ownership and strong networks. Such

links ranged from family members to alumni, business and community ties, and from government decision-makers to eminent social figures in and outside Hong Kong. Sir Robert had two co-equal wives, Lady Margaret Ho Tung and Lady Clara Ho Tung, as accepted by Chinese custom at the time. Lady Margaret remained childless. Lady Clara bore nine children who survived to adulthood, including Robert H. N.'s father.

Free spirit

Growing up in such a prominent Hong Kong family in the 1930s was totally different from today. The turbulence in China led to a flood of people arriving in Hong Kong, doubling the population to 1.6 million in the decade before the Second World War hit the city in 1941. Yet personal security did not seem a major issue for Robert H. N, who would walk to school with family members or on his own. Likewise, his favourite pastimes included scooting off by himself from Idlewild, the palatial mansion in the Mid-Levels area where he lived with Sir Robert and Lady Margaret, to view the latest stamps at a local philatelic store.

Robert H. N. stayed with his grandparents as his father's military career took both his parents away from Hong Kong. "Once in a while, he would come back," recalled Robert H. N. "Only a short visit usually. My mother would go with him." After his sister Margaret Min Kwan was born in 1938, she too lived at Idlewild.

Residing with Lady Margaret could be a daunting experience. Every week, she

would ask the young Robert H. N. to dine with her and drill him on proper etiquette, including how to hold chopsticks and bowl correctly. "She was very stern. There was no talking back and you couldn't leave until you were excused," he said. "I liked her but I was really scared of her."

He felt the opposite about Sir Robert. He did not see his grandfather when dining with Lady Margaret. Sir Robert's poor health necessitated an uncommon diet and the couple only ate together when members of the family gathered to celebrate festivals such as Christmas and Chinese New Year. But Robert H. N. enjoyed the times they met. "When my sister and I did see my grandfather, he always gave us something to take away. My sister loved sweets so she would get them. I would get preserved prunes. He had a nice collection of things on his desk, such as paperweights, and I still have some of the stuff that he gave me. No, I wasn't scared of my grandfather."

While Robert H. N.'s main home was at Idlewild, he would also visit his other grandmother, Lady Clara, who lived on the Peak. This exclusive hillside residential area had been reserved for Europeans until Sir Robert bought three houses and gained special permission to live there. In 1906, Lady Clara and her growing family moved in. By the 1930s, Lady Clara was living in a different house called "The Falls", later known as "Ho Tung Gardens". The high altitude of the Peak area meant it was cooler there and Robert H. N. would often go there in summer to escape the heat and meet his cousins. "It didn't really seem strange to me to have two grandmothers married to the same grandfather. After all, my uncle Ho Kom Tong had one wife and a dozen

concubines all living in the same house. Now that was quite something!"

What did make a profound impact on him was Lady Clara's devotion to Buddhism and to widening awareness of its insights. Although Robert H. N. was still very young when Lady Clara died in 1938, he links his own philanthropic drive to encourage greater global understanding of Buddhist principles to her commitment to Buddhism (see also chapter 3).

As all three grandparents had busy lives, the young boy's day-to-day care was left to a trusted and much-respected amah (nanny), who remained in the Ho household for over five decades. "Ah Kwan stayed with me from when I was 12 days old and she was a part of our family until she died," Robert H. N. said. "When I was living with my grandparents, they paid for all the expenses I incurred for food, medical fees and tuition, but Ah Kwan really raised me. She would stay with me when I was sick. She nagged me. She taught me to do my homework, even though she was basically illiterate and could only sign her name. Before the war, she took care of everything, settling the account with my grandfather and grandmother on how much she had spent on my upkeep."

War in Hong Kong

In December 1941, the comfortable life that nine-year-old Robert H. N. was accustomed to was decisively shattered by the Japanese attack on Hong Kong and subsequent occupation of the territory until August 1945. During the occupation,

the territory's swollen pre-war population shrank by about one million. Some were killed in action or through the privations of the times. The majority were evacuated to China by the Japanese to lessen the problem of feeding so many people.

The start of the conflict caught many members of the far-flung Ho Tung family in Hong Kong by suprise. They had returned to the city to celebrate the 60th (diamond) wedding anniversary of Sir Robert and Lady Margaret, held just six days before the first Japanese bombardment on 8 December. Robert H. N.'s Nationalist officer father was a notable absentee. "My grandfather had summoned – I think that is the word – all relatives to come back to celebrate the anniversary. All of them did return... except my father. My grandparents were extremely upset that one of their sons would not show up for such an important event. Later, it turned out that my father knew exactly when the Japanese attack was coming because he was working in cooperation with British intelligence. All the Chinese government higher-ups knew. But he could not tell us. He just did not show up. My grandparents were so mad! My grandfather did not know the real story until after the war."

For Robert H. N., the early days of war in Hong Kong became an indelible part of his childhood. Indeed, his memory of the day of the initial air raid is as clear now as when it happened. "In those days, there were only a few cars on the road and I always walked to school. I remember I was going along Caine Road to True Light Middle School on the morning of 8 December and saw 30 to 40 Japanese planes come in and start dive bombing Kowloon. I could see them very clearly. At that time, there were no tall buildings and you

had a perfect view of the harbour and Kai Tak Airport from Mid-Levels."

At first he thought the sirens signalled yet another drill. But as he continued to watch, he realised that they were Japanese planes. Frozen on the spot, he watched in disbelief as an oil depot across the harbour was hit, creating a huge fire. "That was a lasting image from my younger days."

Once Hong Kong came under direct assault, ordinary activities in the city came to a halt. For children, this meant no more school. For adults, Robert H. N. recalled, the major problem was that the banks had closed. "And I mean they were closed in every sense of the word," he said. "You could not take money out. You could not go to retrieve stuff from your safety deposit boxes. For the next $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, most people had to live with what they had in their pockets or at home at that time. In our case, we lived on my mother's jewellery. She had taken it out of her safety deposit box for my grandparents' anniversary celebration and still had it with her. Of course, she got ripped off as it always happens when you need to hawk something. But it helped keep us going over the next few years."

Start of the occupation

By 25 December 1941, the battle for Hong Kong was over. The British and Hong Kong forces surrendered and the Japanese took over the city. At Idlewild, there was an uproar as the Japanese commandeered the Ho family home to serve as quarters

for their officers. Sir Robert had fortuitously left for Macau to recuperate from the anniversary celebrations a few days ahead of the first attack. (Macau remained neutral during the war.) Lady Margaret had elected to stay behind. When the Japanese arrived, she was confined to living in the basement, along with other family members who had taken shelter there with her.

For a few weeks, Robert H. N., his sister, mother and amah lived in the basement. The Japanese were hunting for his Nationalist army-officer father but did not realise that his wife and children were encamped just below them. It was a time of great uncertainty, with little public order and Japanese soldiers often on the rampage, creating great fear among the Hong Kong population. While still sheltering at Idlewild, Robert H. N. recollected that once everyone in the neighbourhood was forced to go outside and witness the public execution of three Chinese men. "The Japanese called them criminals and said they had stolen rice, which was very dear at the time as there was not enough to feed everyone. These men were executed right there by sword. This image cannot be erased from my memory," he said. "It was awful and really frightening as I was only nine."

It soon became clear that the Ho family could not stay at Idlewild for long. The family took to hiding in other relatives' homes, spending one night here, one night there. Then they heard that the Japanese were respecting temples. They moved into Tung Lin Kok Yuen, a major Buddhist institution built by Lady Clara a few years before her death. The temple's Abbess had been schooled in Japan and spoke Japanese fluently. When

soldiers looked as if they were going to enter the temple's grounds, she would talk to them in Japanese and get them to leave. Eventually, she posted a notice in Japanese on the gate: "To all Japanese military personnel: do not enter." This kept the temple and the Ho family safe until its plans to leave Hong Kong were in place.

The great escape

During this time, the family acquired false identity papers in the name of Hung, the maiden name of Robert H. N.'s mother. Then a Japanese boat resumed regular sailings between Hong Kong and Guangzhouwan, a French enclave on the southern coast of Guangdong, to encourage people to leave the city. The Ho family decided it was time to go and obtained tickets "at the cheapest level so as not to be conspicuous", Robert H. N. said.

Their journey began by catching a small boat across Hong Kong harbour to Kowloon Wharf (now Ocean Terminal). Alighting at the old Star Ferry pier, the family group – Robert H. N., his sister, mother and amah Ah Kwan – ascended the steps only to find a sudden curfew and inspection of papers underway. No one could move until he or she had been checked. Both Robert H. N. and his mother started to feel panicky about the boat departing without them or their forged papers being spotted.

Then one of life's miracles occurred: "All of a sudden, a Chinese man came over and said in Cantonese: 'Mrs Ho, follow me.' We didn't know what would happen, but we

had to follow him to avoid drawing attention," Robert H. N. said. "He was dressed in plain clothes, just a shirt without a coat or tie. Obviously, he was a collaborator, but he took us through that curfew, put us on the boat and left. We did not know his name. We did not know why he did it. Even after the war, we were unable to trace him to find out. The only explanation, we surmised, was that my grandfather did some good deeds to him or his family and he was now repaying a debt. We still have no answer as to why this happened."

On poverty during war-time

Once in Guangzhouwan, another major journey awaited the family: a 400-kilometre walk to meet up with Robert S. L., who was based in Liuchow, Guangxi Province, an area still free from Japanese occupation. They managed to hire a sedan chair because Robert H. N.'s sister was very young, and they took turns in the seat: either his mother would sit with his sister on her lap; or Robert H. N. would share the seat with Ah Kwan. "We walked for – oh, I don't know – about two-and-a-half to three weeks. We were passing Chinese troops all the time and my father in Liuchow luckily got news of us. He then came to collect us in an ambulance, which was the only vehicle he could find to fit all of us in!"

The years spent in southwest China were a world away from the affluent Hong Kong life that Robert H. N. had previously enjoyed. Food was a perennial problem. He suffered from malaria. All the inevitability of life was taken away. There was no telling how long the war would last and whether it would reach that part of China.

"During the war, we were all poor. You have no idea how poor we were. But we just had to man up to the challenge. I had one pair of trousers and no shoes, except for grass sandals similar to those that the Chinese soldiers wore. We shaved our heads because it took longer to grow back hair this way – and a hair cut cost money."

To sustain themselves, the family grew their own vegetables. Some ducks and chickens provided eggs. Goats produced milk. But there was rarely pork or beef. Instead, lard was mixed with rice. "We were very skinny then," Robert H. N. said. "Such a time influenced me very much. I always say to my children: in the flick of a hand, the world can turn upside down and you can become poor. You never can tell."

Flying to the rescue

Once the US came to help China in the war, Robert H. N.'s father became a major conduit for relationship-building because of his multilingual capabilities and past training in the West. Robert S. L. was assigned a logistics role that involved interaction with US forces and overseas supplies. He was also appointed to the Nationalists' prestigious Military Commission.

In 1944, Robert S. L. was stationed in Kunming. "He had to make sure the route was safe for supplies to get through – it could be anything from rice to ammunition and guns," Robert H. N. said. US General Claire Chennault, of "Flying Tigers" air force fame, was based in Kunming and Robert S. L. got to know him. In another positive

encounter with serendipity, General Albert Wedemeyer was put in charge of the US troops in China from 1944 onwards. Wedemeyer had been a classmate of Robert S. L during his training at the prestigious United States Army Command and General Staff College in Kansas in the 1930s.

On the family front, there was less cohesion. When Robert H. N.'s father moved to Kunming, his mother, sister and the amah stayed in Liuchow. Meanwhile, Robert H. N. was living 150 kilometres away in Gweilin to attend True Light Middle School, which had moved to China from Hong Kong following the Japanese occupation. As fighting in the region intensified, Liuchow looked likely to fall to the Japanese. Robert S. L. asked his son to catch a train back to re-join his sister, mother and amah and help them travel to Kunming. "When I got there, the Japanese were moving quickly and people in Liuchow were beginning to panic. Trains leaving the city were fully loaded. If you wanted to get on, you had to pay somebody who was a muscleman to get you a seat. Those who couldn't get on started to lie in front of the train so it couldn't move. They were that desperate. Getting on a train was impossible so we called my father and told him the situation."

Robert S. L. then spoke to General Chennault and asked if any of his fighters was still flying to Liuchow. And there was one: a B25 bomber sent to the city without bombs to burn all the papers at the US headquarters there. "Of course, we didn't know any of this at the time," Robert H. N. said. "It was between the two of them. By the time we knew anything, there was a jeep with a trailer outside our house and

two Americans knocking on the door."

After the US pair ascertained that they had the right family, they ordered the Ho family to leave with them immediately. "We didn't know what to grab. Then we rushed off to the airport – you could hear machineguns blaring by then – and got on the plane. We sat where the bombs were usually held. No air pressure, nothing. Just us and the two pilots... That was the closest to really being in trouble after Hong Kong."

Grand return to Hong Kong

On 6 and 9 August 1945, the US dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, bringing the war with Japan to an unexpectedly rapid close. Japan's surrender was announced on 15 August and thoughts in the Ho family swiftly turned to a return to Hong Kong. Robert S. L. was first sent to Guangzhou (where he received samurai swords from seven Japanese officers who surrendered to him) and then to Hong Kong to try to restore order in the devastated city. Other family members went to join Sir Robert, who was still in Macau where he had spent the war. "Nobody knew why my grandfather went to Macau," Robert H. N. said. "But as he happened to be there, he stayed during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. The Japanese actually went to Macau to ask him to come back. But my grandfather simply said he was sick. They tried, but he wouldn't budge."

At the end of August, the British administration started to reestablish itself in Hong

Kong and towards the end of the year, British military commander Admiral Cecil Harcourt invited Sir Robert to return to Hong Kong on his Admiralty launch and attend a welcome-back event. It also opened the way for a thrilling journey for Robert H. N.

"Admiral Harcourt wanted my grandfather to come back to Hong Kong – he was Mr Hong Kong then – to make other people feel it was safe to live there again. So Harcourt called my grandfather in Macau and said: 'I'm coming to get you.' He himself was coming! There would be a boat back to Hong Kong – Queen's Pier – and a ceremony 'to let Hong Kong people know you are back'. My grandfather said: 'OK, I'll do it.' By then, Robert H. N. was in Macau and when he heard the story, he asked his grandfather if he could go with him. 'No' was the answer. But the lure of a fast speed boat ride kept Robert H. N. excited. "I begged him all day and finally he called Harcourt and said, 'May I take my grandson?', and Harcourt agreed. That's how I landed at Queen's Pier with my grandfather."

Post-war school days

On returning to Hong Kong, Robert H. N. attended Pui Ching Middle School, where he established a loyal group of friends whom he has remained in touch with ever since. However, after the declaration of the People's Republic of China in 1949, his plans to go to Lingnan College in Guangzhou were altered. Instead, he was sent to the US to finish his high school education and improve his English before attending university there. "Had there been no revolution in China, I would have gone to Lingnan and only afterwards

gone overseas for my postgraduate studies, as that was the tradition in our family."

He chose the US, rather than the family tradition of the UK, because Pui Ching graduates had a closer association with the US and many of his friends would be going to study there. Then the question arose of where to apply? After asking for a recommendation from an acquaintance of his parents in the US Consulate-General, Robert H. N. was told that Pembroke Country Day School in Kansas City – the American friend's hometown – was one of the best in the country. "Although it was a day school, it had room for a few boarders. There were seven of us in total. However, I was the only foreign student. The other six came from Oklahoma!"

On his own in the US

In studying at Pembroke Country Day School, then an all-boys school, Robert H. N. experienced an all-English education environment for the first time. He also had to get accustomed to a complete change of culture as he had not been overseas since visiting the US as a baby. Prior to this move, most of his education had been in Chinese, with English just an individual subject and taught at a basic level. He recalled that he could understand to a limited degree but he had never really had to converse in English before. When he first went to visit the school, headmaster Bradford M. Kingman had said to his mother that he would have trouble with English and history – the subjects he was keen to study at university – if he only went to the school for one year. As a result, he spent two years in Kansas City.

By now, Robert H. N. had attended schools in Hong Kong, Guilin, Kunming and Macau. He had learned to speak Cantonese, Putonghua and some south-western Chinese dialects. He had coped with life-threatening situations. He had also taught himself to quickly adapt to new situations and not let a change of circumstances overwhelm him. This meant that even though education in the US initially could be lonely, away from family, amah, household staff and friends, the situation forced him to communicate totally in English and manage on his own. "It also stopped me from being shy. I became very independent and gained confidence in myself."

Being the sole student from overseas, Robert H. N. experienced cultural gap incidents, especially as most Americans in the 1950s did not travel abroad much and had less experience of meeting people from different countries. "At that time, a lot of people in Kansas City didn't know about the Far East. I remember one question: 'Do you have trees in China?' This has stuck in my head right to this day. But then they all laughed when I got excited about seeing snow for the first time."

He had to get used to cornflakes for breakfast instead of congee and to hearing people say, "I'll see you", and realising it was just an expression and they did not necessarily mean they would meet again. But people were generally kind, realising he was without his family, and they would ask him to stay with them on holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. "I was very fortunate that way," he said. The dormitory supervisor, an English teacher, also looked out for him, issuing invitations to Robert H. N. to have dinner with his family and helping the teenager to improve his English.

In addition, his parents had found a guardian for him – an old neighbour from their Kansas days at the United States Army Command and General Staff College – and in summer Robert H. N. stayed at the guardian's house. In those days, it was simply too far and too expensive to keep travelling back and forth from the US to Hong Kong. "Getting to the school from Hong Kong took several days, with stops in Tokyo and Honolulu ahead of San Francisco and then another flight to Kansas City. So I didn't go home for several years," he said.

Life at Colgate University

Following graduation from Pembroke, Robert H. N. entered one of the golden eras of his life as an undergraduate at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York State. To pursue his passion for English and history, his school headmaster had recommended applying to three liberal arts colleges: Colgate, Williams and Bowdoin. He was given offers by Bowdoin and Colgate and chose the latter because it was located in New York State and closer to New York City. Bowdoin, the college of Longfellow, was in Maine, near the Canadian border. The weather was colder in Maine.

Founded in the 19th century, today Colgate University is a co-ed college of 3,000 students. When Robert H. N. enrolled as a freshman in 1952, it was an all-male college of 1,300. He was the only Chinese at the university and one of just two international students. Yet the four years that Robert H. N. spent at the university proved one of the warmest and most significant educational periods he encountered.

"People there took me in as one of them," he said. He ended up not only with a degree but with life-long friends, an enduring loyalty to Colgate, and a wish to actively support the institution as an alumnus.

During his time on Colgate's scenic 575-acre campus, the institution fostered Robert H. N.'s love for learning and challenging undertakings. His chosen subjects involved reading a great many books and he had only started learning in English during his two years in Kansas City. But he thoroughly enjoyed his education at the university, noting the great encouragement he received from Colgate professors during class and in their own time. "My English improved tremendously at Colgate." He also played soccer and represented the university at tennis competitions.

For Robert H. N., Colgate will always be an unforgettable period of his life where he found a fresh direction and impetus in life both as an individual and part of a close-knit group. "I always tell young people: go to a smaller school," he said. "You don't get lost there. I went through four years of excellence and joy at Colgate. And I am a fellow who remembers these things."

Journalism days in the US

His decision to become a journalist after gaining his degree from Colgate was certainly a different path from his businessman grandfather and military officer father. But it was not totally outside the Ho family's realm of experience. Since

the late 1920s, the family had successfully run the Chinese language Kung Sheung Daily Press group and over two school summer holidays while studying at Pui Ching Middle School after the war, Robert H. N. had served as a proof-reader and a cub sports reporter there. "At home, the conversation was always newspaper, newspaper..." he recalled, illustrating the important position of the paper among the family's many business interests.

To gain extra qualifications ahead of seeking a job in a newspaper, as well as following the family tradition of acquiring postgraduate credentials, Robert H. N. sought to join Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York as a master's student. At the time, applicants needed to have work experience but he did not want to work at his family's newspaper group as "that would be no fun". Instead, he took advantage of his English language skills and went to work first in Taiwan in the international department of the Central News Agency and later for the *Hong Kong Tiger Standard*.

With such experience, he was accepted at Columbia, graduating in 1958 with a Master of Science in Journalism after a one-year intensive programme. He then decided to stay in the United States and develop his career there rather than returning to Hong Kong. He also got married to a childhood family friend he had begun to date during a vacation back in Hong Kong, and the couple started a family in the US. Being young and ambitious, he aimed high in his first job application. "I was so proud of my Master's degree that I applied to *The New York Times* and strangely enough editors there said I could have an interview. When I went there, I talked

about graduating from Columbia and my international experience, and the interviewer's response was that I could start as a copy boy on US\$75 a week, after various deductions for tax and other things. Well, I thought, I'm not going to be a copy boy since I have a Master's degree. So I walked out!

He continued to apply for jobs and eventually The *Pittsburgh Press*, part of the Scripps-Howard chain and a leading paper in Pittsburgh, employed him. He stayed there for around 18 months and then moved to *National Geographic Magazine*, where he was put in the editing department. Later, opportunities to do different types of journalism arose. He became the White House correspondent for *National Geographic Magazine*. He started to freelance, covering stories at the United Nations. Eventually, he decided to leave the *Geographic* and freelance full time. "I wrote for our own paper in Hong Kong and for some small newspapers in the southern states of the US. That was a good era for United Nations coverage."

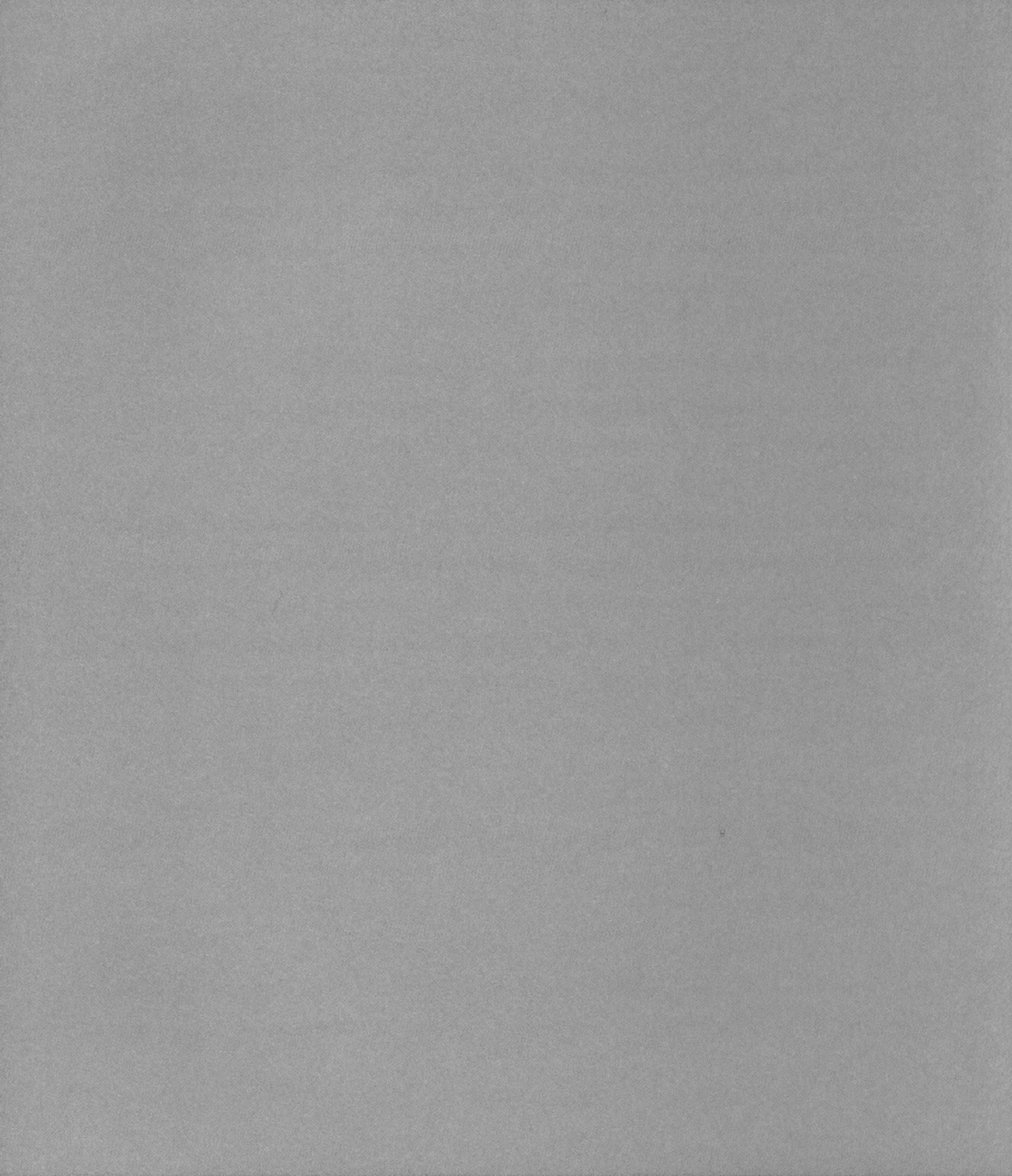
Back in the family fold

During those days, his wife Greta and young son remained in Washington DC. while Robert H. N. commuted to New York for his United Nations stories. But by 1962, family ties were starting to catch up with him. Following the Nationalists' retreat to Taiwan after the Chinese Communist Party's victory and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, his father Robert S. L. had become a significant figure in the Taiwanese government of Chiang Kai-shek. In particular, his liaison work

and close acquaintance with US military figures involved in strategic policy in the Far East helped secure American support for the fledgling Taiwan government. In 1953, Robert S. L. was appointed Taiwan's chief representative to the United Nations' Military Staff Committee based in Washington DC.

In 1956, during Robert H. N.'s final days at Colgate, his grandfather Sir Robert died in Hong Kong. His father and his uncle inherited the family businesses, which were shared between them. Just over a year later, his uncle also passed away. As Robert S. L. was still deeply engaged in his work for Taiwan in the US, for several years after Sir Robert's death, he ran his part of the family portfolio at a distance with the help of a team of managers. But by the early 1960s, such an arrangement was becoming untenable and Robert S. L. retired from his official duties for Taiwan to look after the family businesses full-time. It was a task he felt he required his son's assistance.

Leaving the US at this point was not an easy decision for Robert H. N. to make. "I wanted to stay because it had been so interesting at the *Geographic* and being associated with journalism in North America." However, in 1962, he took up the obligation he felt to the Ho business empire and as his parents' only son and returned to Hong Kong.



Chapter 2

Two Decades in Hong Kong Journalism
Kung Sheung Daily Press Group

Two Decades in Hong Kong Journalism Kung Sheung Daily Press Group

ne of the most recognised businesses among the Ho family's wide range of investments and ownerships in Hong Kong was the Kung Sheung Daily Press, the Chinese language newspaper group, where Robert H. N. had briefly worked when he was a teenager. Bought by Robert H. N.'s grandfather, Sir Robert, in the late 1920s, the media company's newspapers remained under the family's control until it was closed by Robert H. N. and his father Robert S. L. in 1984, coinciding with the signing of the Joint Declaration between China and the UK on Hong Kong's post-1997 future.

The 1960s-1980s turned out to be times of huge swings of fortunes in both politics and the economy in Hong Kong and an exciting period to be in the newspaper business. The riots of 1966 and 1967, oil crises and economic slumps in the 1970s, police scandals and the setting up of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the warming of relations between the United States and China, the deaths of leaders Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong in China and Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan, the rise of Deng Xiaoping and the launch of the open-door economic policy in China, all brought fundamental changes in their wake.

With roots firmly established in US journalism in the early 1960s, it initially took both his parents and several long trips back and forth between the US and Hong Kong to convince Robert H. N. to return to help with the Kung Sheung newspaper group and other family matters.

Down to business

"As our family was small – just one daughter and me – I had no choice but to carry

on the family business," Robert H. N. recalled. "Who was going to do it otherwise?

In the Chinese family mentality, you don't hire people. You take care of your

business yourself. My father also very loudly emphasised that he wasn't trained as

a businessman. He was a military man. When I said I was a journalist and wasn't a

businessman either, he replied: 'You are closer than I am!'"

At the age of 30, Robert H. N. moved his family back from the US to Hong Kong. Over

the next 20 years, he would use his training and experience to take on the roles of chief

reporter, editor and publisher, helping to bring fresh ideas on contents and production to

the Kung Sheung newspapers. He also sought to increase the quality of print journalism '

overall through active participation in professional bodies, such as The Newspaper

Society of Hong Kong, which he chaired twice (1965-1966 and 1985-1986).

By the time he joined, the group published the Kung Sheung Daily News (also

known as Industrial and Commercial News) and Kung Sheung Evening News and

the papers' reporters and editors had built a reputation for solid news stories and

objective comments on social and political issues. Both the daily and evening papers

were popular, with circulation for Kung Sheung Daily News cited at 10% of Hong

Kong newspaper readership, the third largest share in 1966⁽¹⁾.

Footnote (1):

Readership tables: Carol P. Lai's Media in Hong Kong: Press Freedom and Political Change, 1967-2005.

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However, the Chinese language press in 1960s Hong Kong was sharply divided between papers supporting the communist Beijing-based government in the People's Republic of China and the Nationalist-led Republic of China in Taiwan. With his father's prominent past role in the Nationalist military and government, and ongoing connections with Taiwan, the newspaper's editorial stance was firmly pro-Taiwan. While many Hong Kong newspapers dropped the use of the dateline of the Republic of China following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Kung Sheung newspapers did not. In fact, they kept the tradition until they closed. However, the papers were not afraid to include criticisms of matters related to Taiwan or the Chiang Kai-shek government.

Inside story

In the 1960s-1970s, a combined editorial team of approximately 100 people worked in the Kung Sheung newspapers, advancing media coverage and presentation in numerous ways and operating out of the Kung Sheung Daily News Building on Fenwick Street in Wanchai, after a move from the company's traditional base on Des Voeux Road in Central in 1964. The *Kung Sheung Daily News* was then regarded as one of Hong Kong's major Chinese language papers. The main paper carried official company announcements, government notices and regular advertising alongside comprehensive editorial contents, including international news, local stories, features, entertainment and sports stories. The lively, energetic evening edition covered court hearings, accidents, early stock market news and detailed coverage of local football mattches.

Given the Ho family's worldview, the *Kung Sheung Daily News* offered extensive coverage of international news. Indeed, one defining characteristic was that its front page was devoted to overseas news. International stories arrived at the office via teleprinters from the four major global news agencies in operation at the time – US-oriented Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), the UK's Reuters and Agence-France Presse (AFP) from France. These agencies provided the newspaper with a broader perspective on issues than many other local media which made do with just one agency. *Kung Sheung* also established close relationships with prominent overseas news magazines, such as *TIME*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report*. These publications provided useful background information and news analyses. Adding further views, Robert S. L. and Robert H. N. occasionally commissioned correspondents in the US and Europe to write articles for their papers. Staff and freelance translators would then turn wire and freelance stories into Chinese.

Detailed maps, a rarity at the time, were often included given Robert S. L.'s experience in military logistics and interest in geography, to show readers where an event was taking place in the world. The paper was also one of the first local newspapers to switch to offset printing, facilitating greater use of photographs and higher quality. Raymond Yeung Chi-leung⁽²⁾, who joined the newspaper group as a fresh graduate in the mid-1970s and worked there until the papers closed in 1984,

Footnote (2):

Raymond Yeung Chi-leung held the posts of reporter, school sports editor, head of translation, and international news editor at the Kung Sheung newspaper group from 1977-1984. He immigrated to Vancouver in the early 1990s.

Interviewed in 2015 as part of source compilation for the www.roberthnho.com website.

ascribed this to Robert H. N.'s US experience: "He spotted the difference in quality between overseas and local newspapers when he came back to Hong Kong. That's why we were relatively early in moving to offset printing."

In terms of content, the Ho family was rapid adopters of financial news coverage, with its newspapers providing analyses of gold prices and trends, and stock markets in the US and UK as well as Hong Kong. The sports desk led the way in providing detailed coverage of UK and international football matches, producing supplements for major events such as the FA Cup and World Cup. Local football matches were well covered, with sales of the evening paper rising 20% to 30% when there were major matches, according to Shiu Lo-sin⁽³⁾, who worked as a reporter and editor at the Kung Sheung group from 1967-1981. Local and international tennis matches were allocated huge space, given the Ho family members being excellent and passionate players themselves. In addition, the daily paper was regarded as ground-breaking in its use of local celebrity columnists on its features pages.

Interest without interference

With fewer government press conferences and information officers in that era, reporters often dug up local news and feature stories through their own contacts or

Footnote (3):

Shiu Lo-sin worked at the Kung Sheung newspaper group from 1967-1981. He started as a reporter and feature writer at the Kung Sheung Evening News before moving on to become special assistant to the chief editor, international news editor, managing editor, associate chief editor and chief editor of the Kung Sheung Daily News. He now lives between Hong Kong and Seattle.

Interviewed in 2015 as part of source compilation for the www.roberthnho.com website.

followed up with new angles on stories in local English-language papers, given their close relationship with government officials and senior business figures during the UK administration of Hong Kong. Here the Ho family's social standing, overseas exposure and language capabilities gave the Kung Sheung newspapers a competitive edge among Chinese language publications as it had close connections with Hong Kong and international political and business figures, in particular those in Taiwan and the US. Both Shiu and Yeung noted that the elder and younger Ho would sometimes pass on potential story items for reporters to follow up. They also said that neither of the owners interfered in how stories were written.

"They both cared a great deal about the news carried in the paper and would ask us frequently about this," Shiu said. "However, they would not say: 'This should be done in this way or that way.' Instead they would discuss the direction and angle of a certain news story but they would never intervene." The influence of Robert H. N.'s journalistic training and experience overseas was shown in his rigour regarding "the truthfulness of news and quest for professional journalism", Shiu said, meaning he would not exaggerate or inject sensational elements into stories, making the Kung Sheung papers more serious about authenticity. Nor would he bow to outside pressure to hold off reporting certain news items. "The younger Mr Ho was a true journalist, who set high professional standards. Not giving in was one of his characteristics."

Maintaining a journalist's reserve

But pressure there was, especially given the Ho family's wide-ranging business connections and the socialising expected of a member of such a prominent family in Hong Kong. Robert H. N. recalled being asked: "How about writing a story like this or killing a story like that?" Even in the early days when he was a chief reporter, he found himself at the end of badgering phone calls. "People didn't care about my title. They thought I was running the paper because the family owned it!"

His training, though, had helped prepare him. "At Columbia University, professors stressed that journalists are always lonely – because every day you might be writing something that is unpleasant about a friend of yours. When I was on the cocktail circuit, part of the inner me was saying: 'Let's not be too friendly,' "he said.

All quiet on the internal front

Internally, there were different types of stresses with east-west journalistic differences surfacing as Robert H. N. gradually took over more responsibilities for the newspapers. "It could be hard to get new ideas or critiques as people did not want to counter the boss. In western culture, it was easy. You held meetings, people exchanged ideas, and it was all very open. In a Chinese setting, you would sit there and say 'A' and everyone else would say 'A' because you were in charge. If you said 'B', everyone would say 'B'. It was hard to induce people to give you their true

opinion. People were very accommodating to your ideas. But you cannot be smart all the time. You need some input."

In contrast, Robert H. N. was usually ready to give his point of view and remained unabashed no matter how high-ranking or dictatorial the audience was. He recalled his visits to Taiwan when Chiang Kai-shek was President, his father was a respected consultant for the Taiwanese government, and he was working at the Kung Sheung newspapers.

Telling the truth to Chiang Kai-shek

"President Chiang Kai-shek would ask me to visit his office and solicit my opinion of Taiwan, as a reporter. As you can imagine, in his position as a semi-dictator, not too many people would tell him the truth. I told him what I thought: calling a spade a spade.

"I said the traffic in Taipei was terrible due to the problem of traffic lights that allowed pedestrians to cross but held up the flow of vehicles. I said: 'When you are travelling, the street is cleared for you so you wouldn't know these things.' My suggestion was to provide tunnels or bridges for pedestrians to enable the traffic to keep moving. I said: 'You should look into that.' And that's what happened! Hong Kong later did the same. But I give myself the credit for the changes in Taipei!"

In speaking in this way to Chiang Kai-shek whose temperamental reputation was fearsome, Robert H. N. believed it was a way to provide information to someone who was probably desperate to learn what was really happening. At the same time, his own outsider position gave him additional leeway. "For someone in Chiang's position, you are dying for information yet surrounded by people who dare not speak the truth," he said. "They are only saying: 'Yes sir, yes sir.' Well, I thought, I am just a reporter and I don't depend on him. It seems he took my suggestions as fresh ideas. Later, I had many conversations with Chiang's son Chiang Ching-kuo as well." Chiang Ching-kuo served as Taiwan's premier from 1972-1978 and was President of Taiwan from 1978-1988.

Tidiness and professionalism

Back in the Kung Sheung Daily News Building, stories abounded about the regime under Robert S. L., who brought elements of his disciplined army background to the office and liked the staff to call him "General Ho". On the day that new editorial staff first reported for duty, they were told all desk lamps had to be turned off at the end of their shifts or there would be a fine. They were reminded of the dress code with reporters needing to look clean and tidy as representatives of the organisation and other employees expected to dress soberly. Written into staff contracts were the terms that male staff members were not allowed to have long hair. Nor were they allowed to have beards. Transgression would lead to a deduction in their attendance bonus, Yeung recalled. While Robert H. N. was not so concerned about appearance,

the handling of a story mattered to him greatly. "If there were big mistakes in news stories or headlines, then you would be hauled up for sure," Shiu said.

While different in approach in the office, the two Hos were similar in their thrifty ways and simple lifestyles. Robert S. L. was famous for being seen in the same military-style leather coat all year round. Neither would drive a luxury car. Both also had strong characters and tempers, which meant working for the Ho team could be tough. Recollecting those times, Robert H. N. admitted that he could easily lose his cool in the heat of handling deadline pressures. Later, after becoming a practising Buddhist, he noted that his overall approach to life became much calmer.

"Shaolin Monastery" for journalists

The Ho family's careful approach to finances meant pay at the Kung Sheung papers was comparatively low within the media industry. However, the adherence to high professional standards was an important reason why staff came to work at the group. From the early 1960s, the Kung Sheung group raised the bar by hiring university and college graduates as editorial staff – at a time when higher education was available to very few. Reporters were encouraged to read established journalists' stories to gain insights into different writing styles and perspectives on issues and pushed by Robert H. N. to strive for a quality of writing that was at least equal to and preferably much higher than that of other newspapers. There was an insistence on writing both sides of the story and strict objectivity, with none of the writer's personal opinions allowed into news reports.

One generation would teach the next. Shiu, a National Taiwan University graduate, recalled how Yeung, a Hong Kong Shue Yan College graduate, had come under his wing when learning about the paper's unique schools' sports section. But outside professional development was available, too, with opportunities to attend tertiary-institute lectures or even go overseas to countries such as the US and Germany. Having been trained in this way, Kung Sheung staff found themselves in demand and moved on into writing and communication work of all kinds in Hong Kong. "There was a period when Hong Kong's important news media, both electronic and print, were run by people from Kung Sheung," Shiu said.

Editorial stance

Consistency in reporting and editorial viewpoint drove the newspaper group throughout the post-war period. Shiu pointed out: "We recognised the government of the Republic of China, not the People's Republic of China government in Beijing. This position continued until the paper closed. In the *Kung Sheung Daily News*, 'China' was the Republic of China."

However, Kung Sheung did not shy away from criticising what appeared to its editorial group - comprising the two Hos, several famous intellectuals and political commentators and senior writers - to need or deserve such comment. Yeung said this gave the paper a special place in Hong Kong's newspaper industry. Robert S. L.'s high standing with the government in Taiwan and former work at the United Nations,

and the family's good relationship with the UK administration in Hong Kong and US government, meant the paper had the contacts and insight to publish more accurate information, building up the credibility of its reports with readers.

Yeung said: "It was not possible for other papers to know more than the Ho family regarding Taiwan's situation and Hong Kong's social circle. Yet we were not a 'party paper'. We truly spoke for the industrial and commercial sectors. *Kung Sheung* could accurately reveal many facets of society at that time because the Ho family really knew about these matters." Most importantly, both Hos insisted that the papers should be objective in their reporting and neither were afraid of displeasing or offending people. "The 'right-wing' label was simply that the paper recognised the Nationalist government in Taiwan. But if there were problems in that government, we would still say so," Yeung explained.

Mr Shiu agreed. "I need to emphasise that our newspaper was not run by Taiwan. Even today some people in Hong Kong say the *Kung Sheung Daily News* was run by Taiwan, which is absolutely wrong. All the way through, the Ho father-and-son team kept the newspaper independent. It is true that General Ho was very loyal to the Republic of China, but my experience showed it was not blind loyalty. He often went to Taiwan and would meet President Chiang and later his son. When General Ho returned, he would grab me and ask me to write editorials about what he had seen."

Issues ranged from airline operations and hostesses' attitudes to Taiwan's

bureaucracy, Mr Shiu recollected. "Many were things the Taiwan government people didn't want to hear. They would ask: 'Can you not write like this?' But General Ho would still go ahead."

Final edition

By the 1980s, the local and global environments in which the Kung Sheung papers were publishing had altered dramatically. The Mainland had emerged from the chaos of the Cultural-Revolution decade and started its headlong rush to modernisation through paramount leader Deng Xiaoping's "open door" economic policy. Taiwan had become more isolated in the geopolitical sphere while Mainland China was being courted by countries around the world.

Meanwhile, uncertainties over Hong Kong's future grew more and more pressing, with 1997 – the expiry date for the original lease for the New Territories section of the UK's jurisdiction – less than two decades away. The UK and China started negotiations and they eventually agreed that sovereignty would be returned to China with Hong Kong retaining its capitalist way of life for 50 years under the "one country, two systems" concept. The agreement known as the Sino-British Joint Declaration was to be signed in December 1984. The handover itself would take place at midnight on 30 June-1 July 1997.

In the years running up to the Joint Declaration, it had already become clear that

newspapers with a solid pro-Taiwan stance, such as *Kung Sheung Daily News*, were becoming an anachronism. More people in Hong Kong turned their attention to China, in particular the business community. Advertising and readership for newspapers became harder to attract, and the Ho family decided that rather than changing the papers' long-held editorial line, it preferred to close them.

Shiu had already moved on to work in the electronic media but Mr Yeung was there to witness the paper's final edition. Although rumours of the papers' closure had been circulating since 1983, it was not until the night of 30 November 1984 that staff were informed it was to be their final shift. On 1 December, the *Kung Sheung Daily* hit the streets for the last time with the news of the papers' demise. "When people came to interview (the younger) Mr Ho, he said: 'Of course, we kept that exclusive to ourselves!"

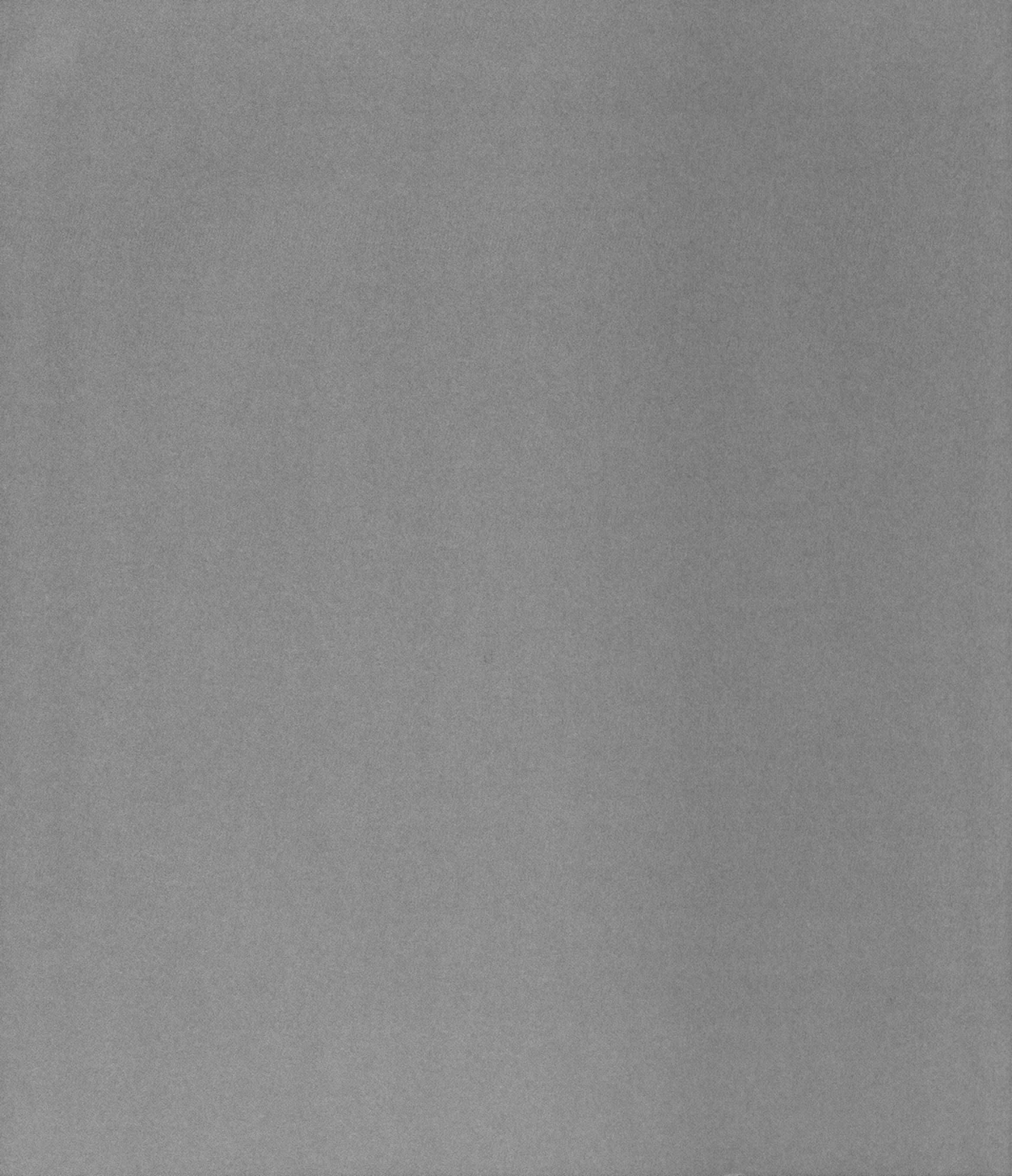
The timing of the closure and the respect for the Kung Sheung newspapers kept reporters on other newspapers busy filing stories on, and analysing, the development. Shiu recalled: "Several of the so-called major newspapers initially saw the Republic of China as the official Chinese government and did not follow the UK government in recognising the People's Republic of China. Gradually, most stopped refusing to contact people related to Beijing. General Ho and Robert H. N. were not like that. Only in the 1990s did they slowly come to adopt a relatively accepting attitude towards Mainland China."

In recollecting the closure, Robert H. N. said: "We looked at the political situation. We felt that our editorial stance was too much to the right – and we didn't want to change our position. We didn't want to be what is known in Chinese as a 'bamboo tree', always swaying. In addition, people were sensitive about our papers' stance and didn't advertise in them fearing they would alienate the leftists."

New life goals

The decision to stop the presses brought the story of a colourful 60-year presence in Hong Kong reportage to an end. The move also represented a watershed for Robert H. N. Over the years, he had undertaken several community service roles, among them chairman of the Community Chest (1973-1974), trustee of Lingnan College (1975-1978) and, like his grandfather, a justice of the peace (1985). But he wished to extend such endeavours.

His interest in Buddhism had been growing since the 1970s and with it a drive to make its philosophy more accessible to people around the world. His calling to innovative philanthropy began to move from a vision to a more structured form that went on to embrace the setting up of a family foundation as well as personal initiatives in education and healthcare. With the Kung Sheung newspapers shut down, he refocused his energies on these new pathways through which he could contribute to his family heritage, his hometown of Hong Kong and later his new home in Vancouver, Canada.



Chapter 3 –×≫≪×-

Family Legacy, Community Heritage
Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist Temples

Family Legacy, Community Heritage Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist Temples

A long with his return to the family business empire in Hong Kong in the 1960s, Robert H. N. experienced a turning point in his philosophical outlook, becoming an advocate for greater knowledge and understanding globally of Buddhism, Buddhist art and thought. This is both a legacy he felt he inherited from his grandmother Clara, founder of the Tung Lin Kok Yuen temple in Happy Valley, and a personal belief in the positive impact that Buddhism can have on a person's approach to life.

For many years, though, he stayed away from active involvement in Buddhism, finding the religion too esoteric to fathom or appeal. In the late 1960s, family responsibilities meant that he had to take a seat on the Tung Lin Kok Yuen board. At that time, his view was transformed by his friendship with fellow board member Wu Yi, a Taiwanese monk with a gift for explaining Buddhist thought in a straightforward way.

Belief and living as you wish to be

"My behaviour changed a lot after I met Wu Yi. We got to know each other as he sat next to me during Tung Lin Kok Yuen board meetings. I didn't know him before that time. Wu Yi was a great influence mainly because he told me what Buddhism

was all about in plain language. With the priests, I could be sitting there all day and not know what they were saying. This meant at school and college, when I had no interest in Buddhism because I couldn't understand it. Frankly, Buddhism is very deep and you have to learn a lot about the philosophy as well as the religious aspects.

"However, when I was chatting with this monk, I found he could explain Buddhist philosophy to me clearly. He was very easy going and liberal, not stiff or restricted to rituals. For example, if he wanted to eat salad rather than cooked veggies, he would say: 'How about going to the salad bar in the Hilton Hotel?' (A site now occupied by Cheung Kong Building in Central, Hong Kong.) I would say: 'Sure!'

"Quite a few new feelings affected me once I became a practising Buddhist. Number one: humbleness. Number two: I felt at peace. Number three: I decided there wasn't anything worth getting too excited about, especially disputes. Prior to that, I used to be temperamental and sometimes I would just blow up, especially when I was working in newspapers and facing deadlines. I used to yell at everybody and I don't think anyone enjoyed being around me.

"Even now, though, I'm not one of those people who go to the temple and pray every day. I'm not well versed in Buddhism. But I've heard and read enough about it – not studied but read – to make me feel that this is the way I would like to be."

Founding days

Lady Clara established the landmark Tung Lin Kok Yuen in 1935. Tung was her husband's given name, Lin Kok, her own, and Yuen was the Chinese word for temple. In the building's earliest days, it became home to Lady Clara's Po Kok Free School for Girls, founded in 1930 in Hong Kong's Causeway Bay. It also incorporated the Po Kok Buddhist Seminary for nuns and female lay followers, established in 1932 and originally located in the Castle Peak area of the New Territories. In doing so, Tung Lin Kok Yuen became the only Buddhist nunnery and seminary on Hong Kong Island.

Although Robert H. N. was a small boy at the time, he would often accompany Lady Clara to the chanting ceremonies she attended at the temple. "I do feel she had picked me out from all the cousins. But because of that I had to suffer all those ceremonies. Of course, I am a Buddhist now and appreciate them. But at the time I thought it was so boring! I had to sit there silently, listening to the rituals with nothing to do. I would try to sneak out. But, no! I was always told to sit there."

After Lady Clara's death in 1938, the board of directors, including family members, continued to oversee the temple's operation. During World War II and amid much destruction in Hong Kong, Tung Lin Kok Yuen remained intact, despite its relief activities for Chinese troops and others prior to the

Japanese occupation of the city. This enabled the temple to retain its collection of calligraphies by luminaries and religious figures, acquired through the Ho family's significant role in the history of Hong Kong, China and Taiwan, and the temple's key place in nurturing Buddhism in Hong Kong.

Works in the temple includes a pair of couplets by political reformer Kang Youwei, leader of China's 1898 reform movement, who was sheltered from the wrath of the Empress Dowager as a house guest of Robert H. N.'s grandfather, Sir Robert, in Hong Kong soon after the movement failed. There is a horizontal inscription by "Young Marshal" Zhang Xueliang, instigator of the Xian kidnapping of Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, who was subsequently held under house arrest for 50 years following Chiang's release. The Young Marshal was a lifelong friend of Robert H. N.'s father. Another inspirational piece is a calligraph by Master Fat Ho, one of the founders of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association.

Moving with the times

Today, the Hong Kong temple complex comprises a hall of worship, ancestral hall, library, Buddhist book centre and living quarters, among other areas. Large portraits of Ho family members hang on the walls of the ancestral hall. Meanwhile, the Po Kok schools expanded from one to three over the years to cater for rising demand as Hong Kong's population surged. The primary school remains based at the temple while the secondary school and a branch school are located in the New Territories. In

view of the changing times and educational landscape, all three schools now admit boys as well as girls.

Likewise, the temple itself underwent a drastic change in 2007 with the spiritual leadership of Tung Lin Kok Yuen opened up to men as well as women. This led to the board's appointment of the Venerable Tsang Chit as the temple's first abbot. In the 1990s, Robert H. N., then chairman of the board of directors at Tung Lin Kok Yuen, established the temple's first overseas branch in Vancouver, Canada, adding an international element to its reach (see panel).

From East to West: Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Canada Society

In 1995, exactly 60 years after the founding of Tung Lin Kok Yuen in Hong Kong, the temple's first overseas branch held a memorable consecration ceremony led by Dharma masters Hsing Yun, Kok Kwong, and Wu Yi at 2495 Victoria Drive in Vancouver.

Earlier, spurred by uncertainties related to Hong Kong's impending return to Chinese sovereignty in 1997, the Tung Lin Kok Yuen board had charged Robert H. N. and his Buddhist mentor, Venerable Wu Yi, with exploring options in North America. The pair first travelled across the United States to look at cities with major Chinese populations, such as New York and San Francisco. But complex rules related to sites

for religious buildings eventually precluded the idea of a temple anywhere in the United States.

In Canada, they found far fewer restrictions. While the actual number of Chinese people in Vancouver was lower than Toronto, the higher concentration in the Pacific coast city due to its smaller geographical spread saw Vancouver selected.

Buddhist presence

On Victoria Drive, what had previously been a Chinese restaurant was transformed into an oasis of calm and a focus for the city's growing number of Buddhists to worship with the establishment of the temple in 1994. Later, the acquisition of dilapidated housing units nearby enabled a makeover into an atmospheric ancestral hall, where people could pay their respects to relatives who had passed away.

The 20,000-square-foot temple complex now includes a longevity hall, a meditation hall, a memorial hall with pictures of early Ho family members, a conference hall and a multi-purpose hall. There are also a shop for Buddhist artefacts and literature, a vegetarian kitchen, a library open to the public and a small garden for contemplation.

In Canada, donations from the Buddhist community are more limited than in Asia.

However, by acquiring a small strip of land opposite the temple and redeveloping it into rental apartments for people over 55, an on-going financial support for the Tung Lin Kok Yuen branch in Vancouver was generated. The residences, known collectively as Lin Kok Manor, opened in 2001.

Challenges and resolution

While the temple quickly established itself with older Chinese people, it proved harder across generations and cultures. Challenges ranged from the management of a Chinese Buddhist temple in a mainly English-language environment to how to reach out to different aged groups.

In 2004, Robert H. N. set up the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation to help close that generational gap by advancing Buddhist knowledge through the tertiary education sector in Canada and as part of his goal to set up a global network of Buddhist studies.

Living history

Among the most pressing of the tasks at Tung Lin Kok Yuen in Hong Kong is conservation to enable future generations to learn more about the institution's unique history, buildings and purpose. In 2009, the temple was accorded Grade 1 historic building status by the Hong Kong government.

In 2015, on the 80th anniversary of the temple's founding, the temple launched a project to preserve its past. The initiative has seen conservation architects employed and surveys undertaken to ascertain its mint condition. Software as well as hardware, meanwhile, is regarded as important, with digitalisation of the temple's historic books and records underway.

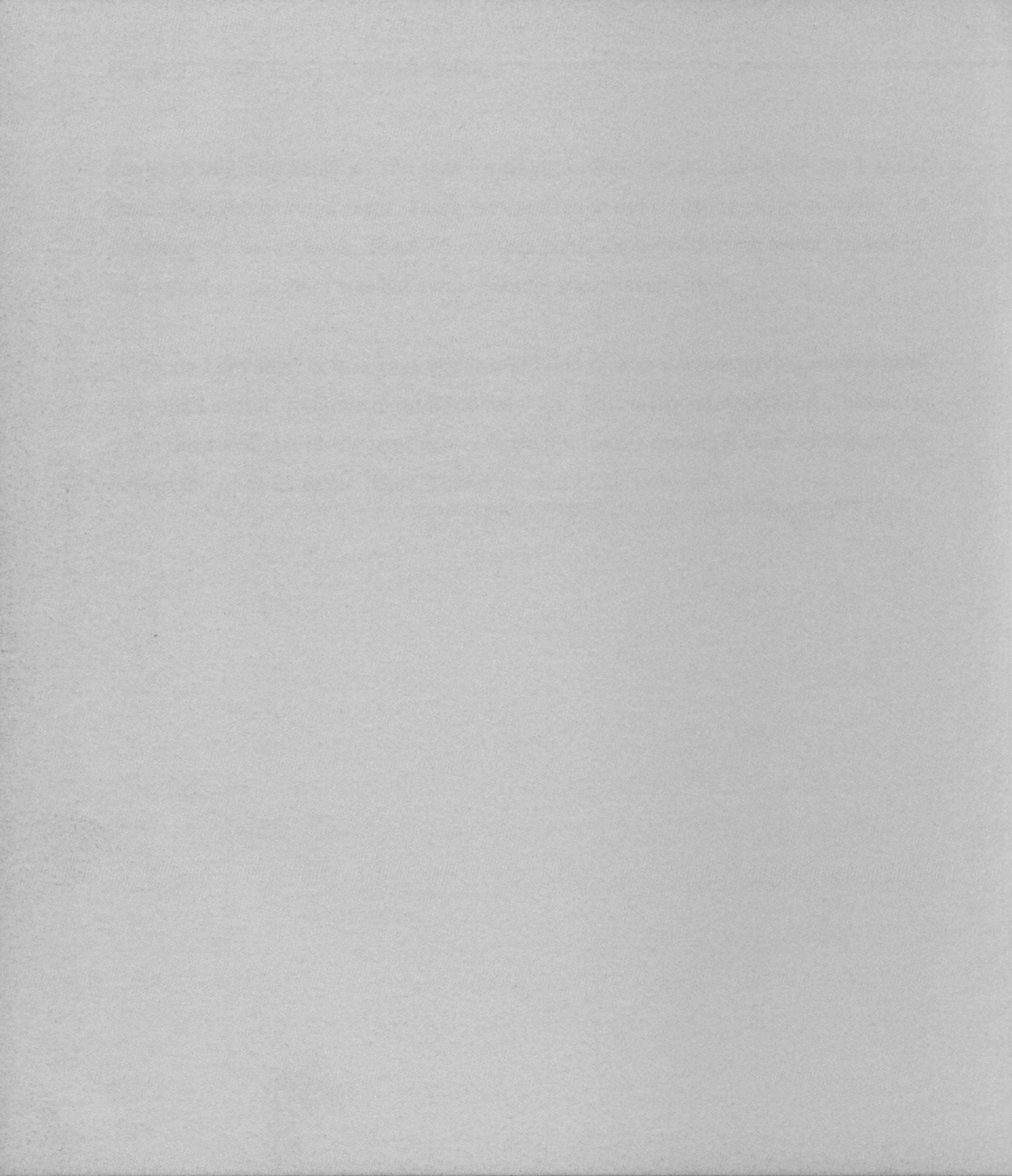
Temple guardian

In continuing his active involvement with Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Robert H. N. believes that he is helping to advance Lady Clara's wishes and intentions. In doing so, he feels he is fulfilling a role that his grandmother delegated to him in a life-changing encounter in her final hours when he was just six years old.

"On the day she died, we were all at Ho Tung Gardens. All the sons and daughters were there. My cousins and I were not allowed into her bedroom. Nevertheless, she said she wanted to see me. Just me, out of all the children. I went in. She

couldn't talk any more as she was on oxygen. But she waved to me, so I stood there. Everybody stood there. There was not much conversation. After a while, she indicated for me to leave. Then, 15 minutes later, she asked for me again. I went in, she waved to me, and I was led away. Shortly after that she died.

"Why do I say this? It is always in my mind that maybe she was giving me a mental sign that I should continue to do Buddhist work. This is my interpretation... Now I'm a Buddhist and one of my sons is too. It always makes me think that, somehow, she passed the spirit on to me. Thus, I carry on, and I like to do so."



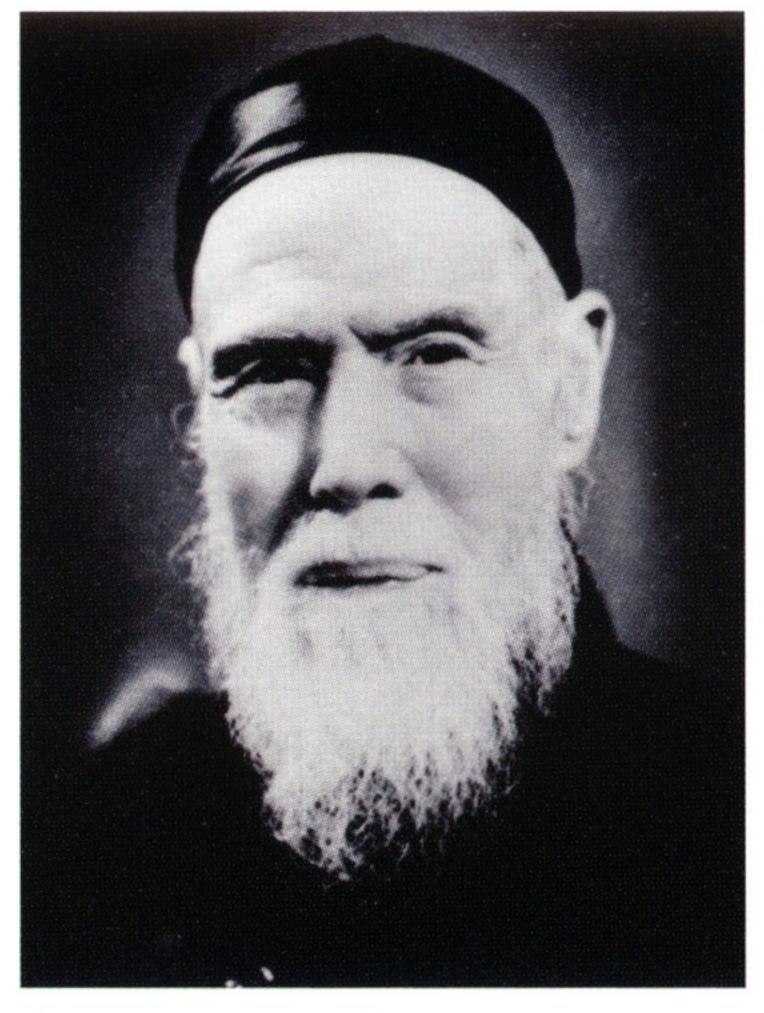
My Times



Robert H. N. Ho (Robert H. N.) perpetuates his family's philanthropic legacy, which started in the generation of self-made business tycoon Sir Robert Ho Tung.



Robert H. N. as a baby with (from left) his Chinese Nationalist army officer father Robert Ho Shai-lai (Robert S. L.), grandmother Lady Margaret, grandfather Sir Robert, and mother Hesta Hung.



Grandfather Sir Robert



Grandmother Lady Clara



Grandmother Lady Margaret



Father Robert S. L.

With amah (nanny) Ah Kwan, who stayed with the Ho household for over five decades.





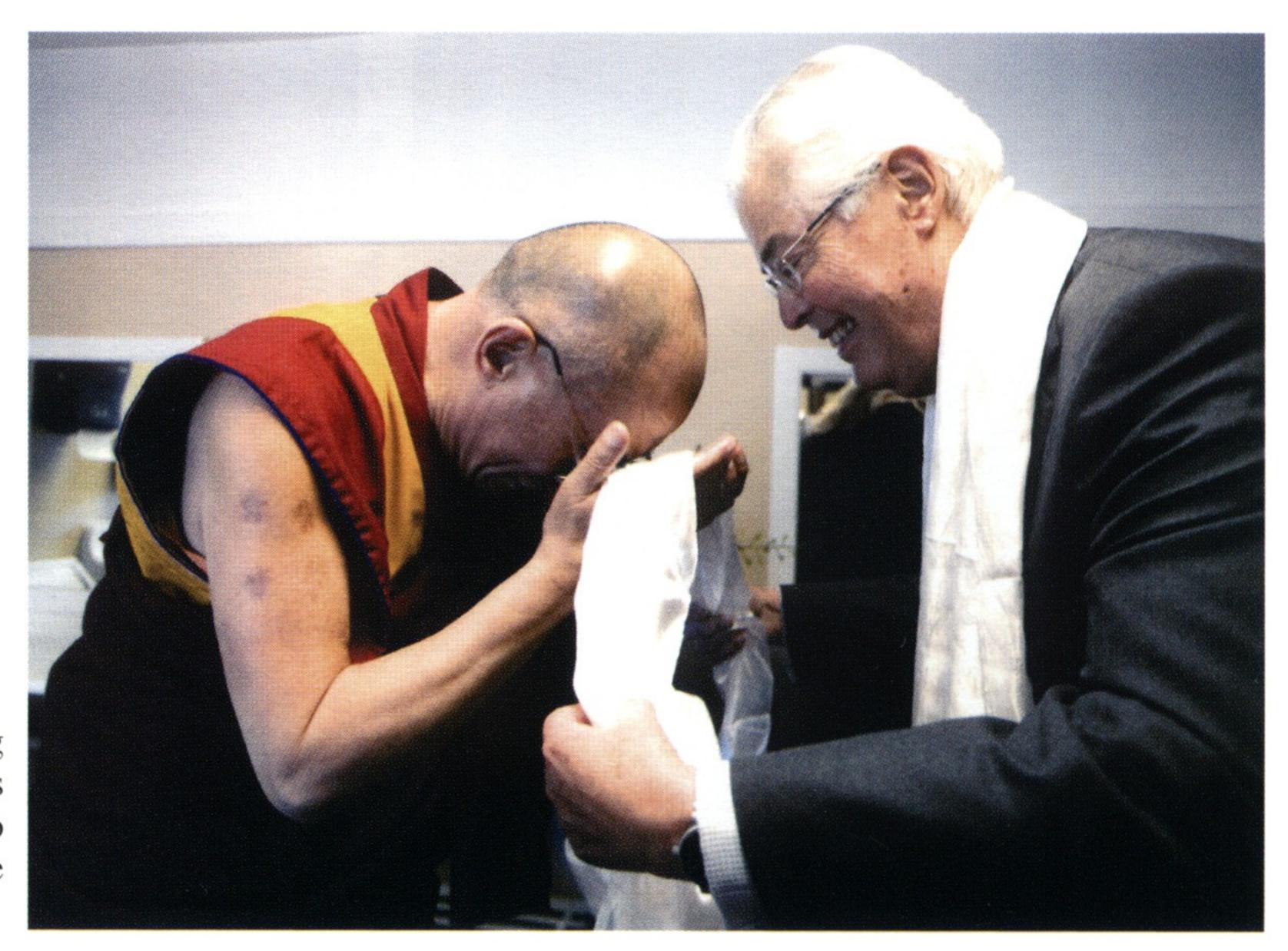
Childhood at the Idlewild.







Studying at Colgate University in the US proved an extremely happy educational experience and inspired life-long loyalty.



Exchanging blessing with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who visited the Colgate campus in 2008.



An uncompromising and passionate journalist.

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Father Robert S. L. (front row, second from left) and military classmates in 1927.



Front row from right: Robert S. L., Admiral Cecil Harcourt, General Zhang Fakui, and General Francis Festing.



Robert S. L. and former US President George H. W. Bush (right)



A photo of Robert H. N. with former US President George H. W. Bush (left) and personal greetings to Robert S. L.



With former US President George H. W. Bush at the opening of the Seeds of Conflict: China-Japan-United States display at the National Museum of Pacific War. The plaque honours Robert S. L.'s contribution during the Second World War.



Robert H. N. served as chairman of the Community Chest in 1974.



With Robert S. L. in front of a portrait of Sir Robert.



Tung Lin Kok Yuen has nurtured Buddhism and education since completion in 1935.

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Robert S. L. and Robert H. N. attend the inaugural ceremony of the Venerable Ci Hui, who became the fifth abbess of Tung Lin Kok Yuen in 1995



Robert H. N. speaking at Abbess Ci Hui's inaugural ceremony



Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Canada Society



With renowned Chinese novelists Professor Pai Hsien-yung (left) and Louis Cha Leung-yung, aka Jin Rong.



"Previewing the Britain Meets the World exhibition at the Palace Museum in Beijing in 2007, with Neil MacGregor, then Director of the British Museum (the above picture) and celebrating the opening (the following picture). The exhibition was jointly presented by the two museums and supported by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.





In discussion with Jay Xu, Director of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, at the *Power & Glory:* Court Arts of China's Ming Dynasty exhibition in 2008.



A meeting with Cai Guo-qiang at *Cai Guo-qiang: I Want to Believe* in 2008, the first solo exhibition devoted to a China-born artist at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.



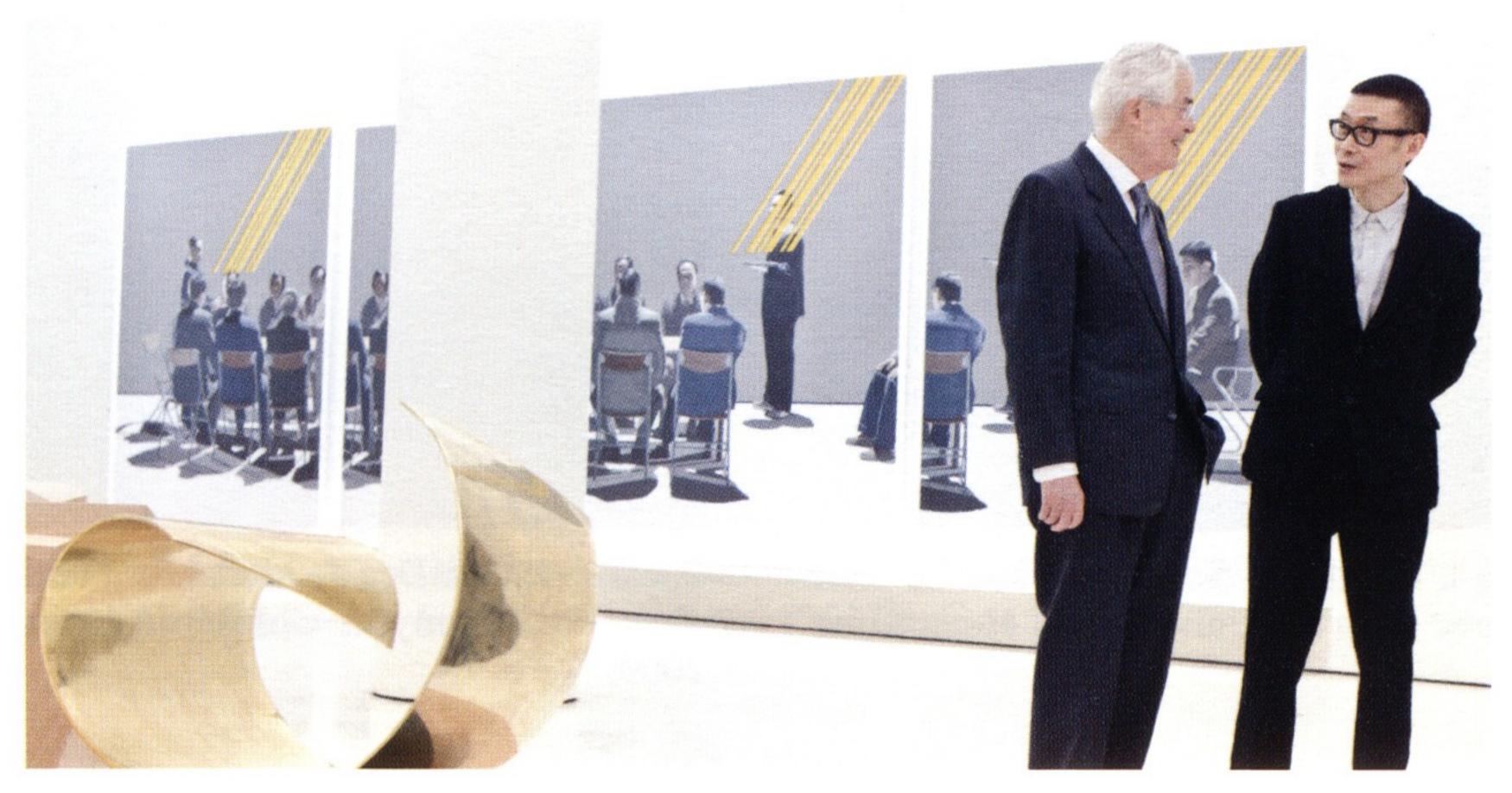
At the opening of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Gallery of Buddhist Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2009.



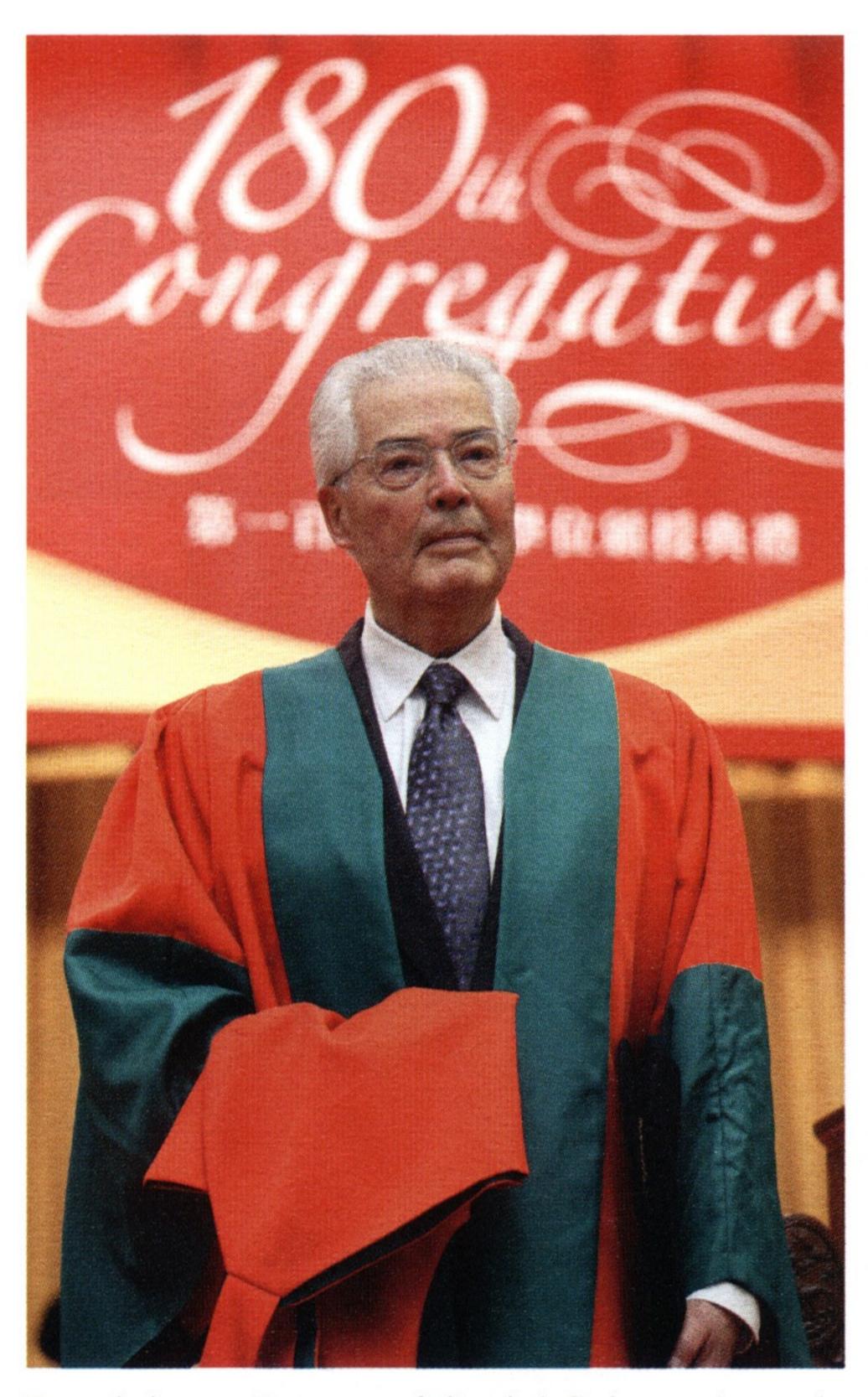
In 2010, the Foundation supported the Royal Ontario Museum in presenting *The Warrior Emperor and China's Terracotta Army* exhibition, marking the army's first visit to Canada.



Admiring an exhibit (an informal outer gown for women from the Qing dynasty) at *The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China Emperors* exhibition, held at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2014.



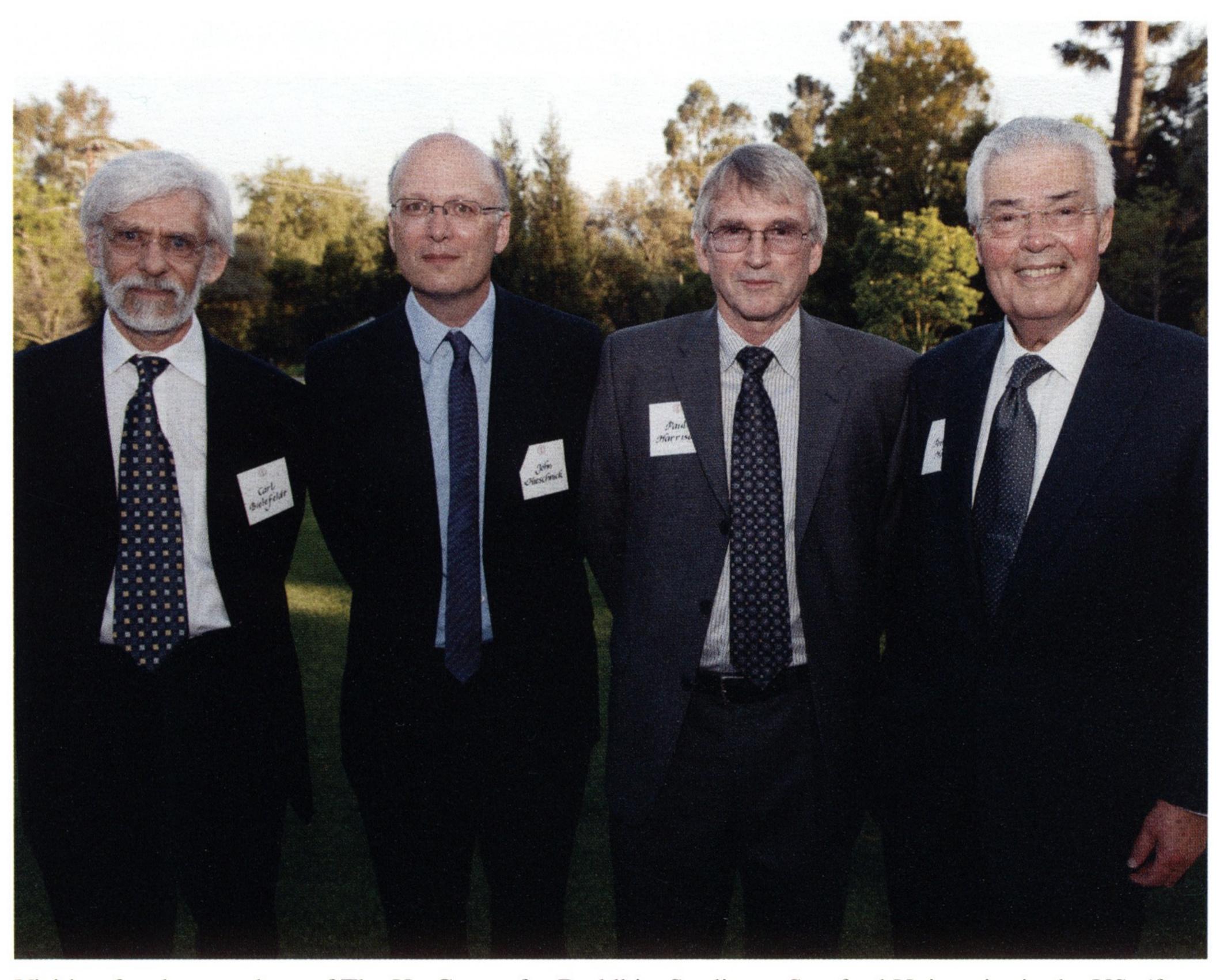
In conversation with artist Wang Jianwei at the opening of the *Wang Jianwei: Time Temple* exhibition at the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in 2014.



Receiving a Doctor of Social Science honoris causa degree from the University of Hong Kong in 2009.



Speaking at the Dean's Medal for Public Service award ceremony at Columbia University in 2009.



Visiting faculty members of The Ho Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford University in the US: (from left) Professors Carl Bielefeldt, John Kieschnick and Paul Harrison.



Being appointed to the Order of British Columbia (OBC) in 2013. Chancellor of the Order Judith Guichon (right) and Premier Christy Clark (left) officiated at the ceremony.



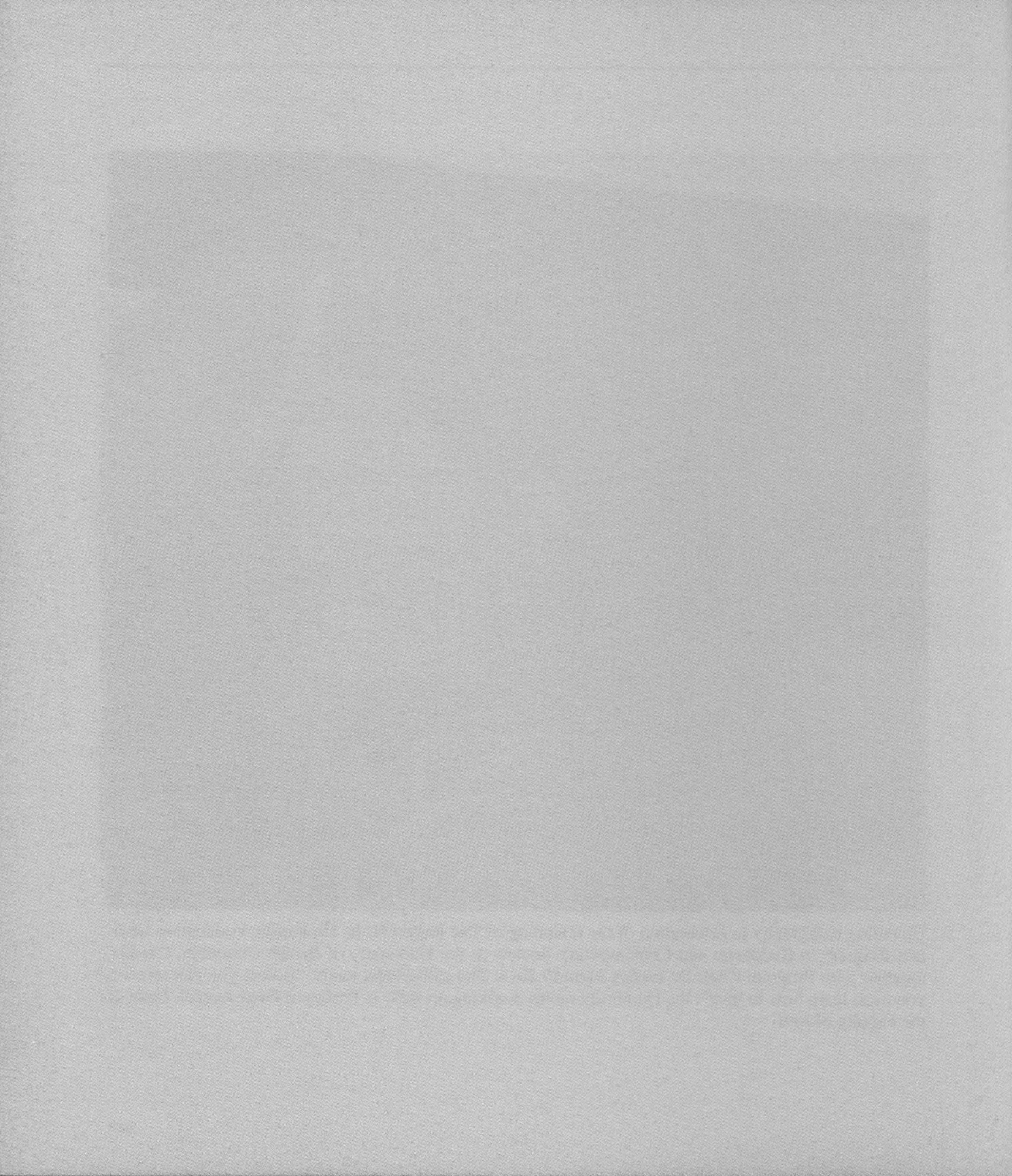
A deep interest in healthcare led to a personal donation to support building The Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre in Vancouver, Canada to assist cutting-edge cancer and hip health and mobility research.



Moving mental health issues front and centre stage: HOpe Centre, North Vancouver.



Unveiling calligraphy in celebration of the renaming of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chair and Program in Buddhism and Contemporary Society at the University of British Columbia, Canada, together with Program Chair Dr Jessica Main in 2014. The calligraphy reads: "Before you can receive, you must learn how to give", the Ho family motto. Looking on (left) is Professor Gage Averill, Dean of the Faculty of Arts.



Chapter 4

Philanthropy Catalyst

Education, Healthcare, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

Philanthropy Catalyst

Education, Healthcare, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation

Outlook and Goals

When I work at something as a job, any success is achieved for the organisation. When I am working on philanthropic endeavours, it is for society. It is a totally different feeling"

- Robert H. N. Ho

By the 1990s, Robert H. N. and his wife had moved to Vancouver, Canada, to assist with the establishment of the Tung Lin Kok Yuen temple in the city. Along with the physical move came a new drive to actively engage in philanthropy. Since then, Robert H. N. has assisted numerous innovative projects in a range of farreaching areas: provision of education opportunities from the arts to the sciences and from the community to scholarly levels; healthcare advances through research; infrastructure and professional development; and advancing east-west understanding through Chinese arts and culture and Buddhist-related initiatives.

His philanthropy has taken two forms: individual giving to personal causes of interest; and contributions through The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation to develop areas that he and his immediate family would like to support. Robert H. N.'s own giving has focused on innovative initiatives with Colgate University,

his alma mater in the US, and healthcare in Vancouver. The Foundation, founded in 2005 and based in Hong Kong, is dedicated to international and Hong Kong activities related to traditional and contemporary Chinese arts and culture and wider global understanding of Buddhist insights. The Foundation's vision is to foster wider intercultural understanding and to continue the philanthropic work of earlier generations of the Ho family. Initially, Robert H. N. was chairman as well as founder. In 2010, his eldest son took on the chairmanship.

In both types of philanthropy, Robert H. N. has shown a willingness to take the lead in areas that may otherwise go unnoticed or find fund-raising a challenge. There is also strict adherence to accountability, with recipients expected to provide reports and undergo audits to make sure the maximum amount possible is spent on the philanthropic goal itself. "There are two ways to go with philanthropy," he noted. "Either you are proactive or you just write a cheque." And becoming involved has been an important part of Robert H. N.'s philanthropy. "This is one thing I didn't inherit as my grandfather was one of those people writing cheques! My father also wrote cheques."

In his case, he has consulted experts from a specific field to learn what is needed to kick-start projects, as well as support the realisation of well-researched, impactful solutions to improve people's lives. The approach has led to giving as diverse as donations for a world-leading cancer research centre building and the setting up of a ground-breaking education programme for healthcare professionals in Vancouver to support through the Foundation for programmes that can build a Buddhist learning

network in leading universities around the world, among others.

There has also been a gradual move in administering the Foundation towards recruitment of high-quality people beyond the family circle. The Foundation has a board of directors, comprising experienced and relevant senior figures in its core areas of focus in addition to family members. There are a full-time chief executive officer and a chief operating officer, and an established team of staff to administer and run the organisation. "The family can oversee everything," Robert H. N. said. "But it doesn't have to do everything."

In his philanthropy over the past 25 years, just as his days as a journalist, the overarching motivation has been to make a difference to people and their communities by discovering areas of social significance that need to be addressed and drawing fresh attention to them. For Robert H. N. Ho, it is a question of finding out how best to give back and the satisfaction this brings. Or in the words of his grandfather: "learning how to give".

Individual Giving

Education at Colgate University

"Colgate was one of the happiest periods of my life"

- Robert H. N. Ho

olgate University, a private liberal arts college in central New York State, where Robert H. N. earned his bachelor degree in the 1950s, was one of the early beneficiaries of his philanthropy. "It was a very good school. I received an excellent education and gained a network of friends there," he said. "In fact, I still meet up with six or seven schoolmates even though we are all over 80 years old now."

To give back, Robert H. N. became a dedicated alumnus and donor, providing funding for small and large projects, including the college's spectacular, state-of-the-art Robert H. N. Ho Science Center and Ho Tung Visualization Lab, named after his grandfather Sir Robert. In addition, he was instrumental in organising a landmark visit to Colgate by the Dalai Lama.

Far-reaching support

Donations were made to the athletics department, history department and Chinese studies department to assist current and future generations of students. Previously, there had been one basic Chinese class. Today, there is a Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, including the Robert Ho Center for Chinese Studies. Established in 1993, the Center includes classrooms, a reading room and reference materials. Robert H. N. also provided support for related faculty positions. Colgate has now become one of the leading small liberal arts colleges in the US in sending students overseas for exchanges. In 2015-2016, the university also hosted students from 47 countries, with China the top country of origin.

In 2008-2009, Robert H. N. supported "A Year of Chinese Arts at Colgate University", a programme of cultural events to honour emeritus professor of geography and emeritus director of peace studies Theodore Herman, who had lived and worked in China in the 1930s and 1940s. Professor Herman, who passed away in 2010, joined Colgate in 1955, providing a poignant link with the Far East for Robert H. N. during his student days and becoming a lifelong friend. Professor Herman had earlier donated a large collection of modern Chinese woodcuts to the university, with over 60 items featured in an exhibition during the year of events.

Elevating science, inspiring others

More widely visible was the Robert H. N. Ho Science Center. The architecturally striking facility, opened in 2007, was specifically designed to encourage multidisciplinary studies. As well as the geography department, chaired in earlier decades by Professor Herman, it included environmental studies, geology, physics and astronomy departments and programmes, and part of the biology department. There were also a greenhouse, environmental chambers, a cold room, dark rooms, a radioactivity lab and an auditorium.

The Ho Tung Visualization Lab was another highlight of the Science Center that opened up the frontiers of space as well as research into past and present life and landscapes on earth. The amazing digital theatre experience encouraged greater integration of disciplines on campus as well as bringing town and gown together by being available to schoolchildren and community groups. The lab allowed a religious

studies faculty member to take students on a three-dimensional tour of a mosque or cathedral; architecture academics to walk their class through buildings; and art historians and geographers, physicists and astronomers to show and tell.

Dr Rebecca Chopp was president of Colgate from 2002-2009. She recalled how Robert H. N.'s philanthropy had transformed the nature of giving at Colgate and in the process the university itself. "He just stretched everyone's imagination," she noted. "It allowed Colgate to step into a league it had only dreamed of until that point. The impact on other donors was enormous. People saw what he did and it inspired them."

Landmark philanthropy

The impact on both the campus and the outside community was also tremendous. For a rural upstate university campus and nearby townspeople, having such an extraordinary facility in their midst opened windows on worlds previously unimaginable, Dr Chopp noted. The donation elevated the academic level at Colgate and consequently the reputation of the college. When the Visualization Lab was launched, it was one of just a handful in the US. "Colgate had always been a strong liberal arts school but in science it had been a hidden gem in American education. People didn't realise how strong the faculty was and the Science Center really called attention to that," she said.

Another unusual feature of Robert H. N.'s philanthropy was his proactive engagement in the Science Center project, from plans for the building to the kind of experience he wanted students and faculty to receive. He kept abreast of the time frame to make sure the project was built on schedule and watched over the finances as well. Dr Chopp, a member of the Board of Directors at The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation since 2008, explained: "I think he was one of the early philanthropists to really understand that he needed to make sure the institution was accountable, from its time schedule to how it used the funds. It is more common nowadays but in those days he was one of the first."

Dalai Lama campus visit

Along with financial support, Robert H. N. brought a further gift to the Colgate community through helping to arrange a visit by the Dalai Lama in 2008. During that time, around 5,000 people attended a free talk and Q&A session on happiness given by the Dalai Lama on campus. Separately, the Dalai Lama spent time in panel discussions with students and faculty. "The Dalai Lama stayed for four days and many, many students got to meet him," said Dr Chopp. "Colgate is not in New York, or Chicago or even Denver, where it might be more common to meet somebody famous like the Dalai Lama. His visit had a lot of impact on the students."

During the visit, faculty members showed how the Ho Tung Visualization Lab was transforming the sciences at Colgate with a remarkable demonstration to Robert H. N.

and the Dalai Lama that started in outer space and went down to the home where the Dalai Lama had lived as a child, Dr Chopp said.

For one of the cashiers at the University dining hall, the visit provided an extra special moment too when Robert H. N. took her over to meet the Dalai Lama in person. Jean Brooks had been a member of staff on the Colgate campus for 30 years. As she told the University's *Scene* magazine, she had been refilling Robert H. N.'s water glass when he asked her if she had been introduced. "Then he took the water pitcher out of my hand, set it on the table, took me over, and said: 'Your Holiness, I would like you to meet a good friend of mine, whom I see every time I visit Colgate," Brooks recalled in the 2008 interview. The Dalai Lama then took her hand and laid his cheek on it. The whole sequence of events left her speechless – and almost in tears.

Meaningful memories

Through Robert H. N.'s natural inclusiveness and generosity of spirit, his gratitude to his own family for enabling him to have a college education, his friends, and a wish to let others benefit from a Colgate student life, the bonds with his alma mater have been strongly maintained. In recognition of his many endeavours on behalf of the university, Robert H. N. was awarded the title of Doctor of Humane Letters, honoris causa, in 2011. "Mr Ho is very loyal to the experiences he had at Colgate, and to his family," Dr Chopp said. "I think he has wanted to honour both the legacy of his grandparents and family, who enabled him to come to Colgate, and the deep and abiding friendships he made in college."

Healthcare in Vancouver, Canada

"It's not about fulfilling your own wishes. You give to what is really needed"

- Robert H. N. Ho

Setting donations to improve outcomes for hundreds of thousands of patients in his adopted home of Vancouver and many others further afield. In that year, he supported the acquisition of Canada's first dedicated cardiac CT scanner to improve heart patient care at the Vancouver General Hospital, the key medical facility for many of the 4.6 million people living in the province of British Columbia. The gift also funded renovation of the cardiac catherisation unit to provide additional space for medical procedures, with the facility renamed the Robert and Greta Ho Cardiac Investigation Centre. Other donations subsequently followed.

The Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre

In 2009, Robert H. N. gave major support to the hospital's new integrated research building, later named the Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre. He kick-started the process through informal consultations with doctor friends working in Vancouver about the most pressing needs for the region's public healthcare system. The medics told him about the challenges facing several research teams. These scientists were

engaged in world-leading studies in areas of major global impact, such as prostate and ovarian cancer and hip mobility. Yet they were scattered throughout the vast complex of hospital buildings, with few opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary collaboration that can spark innovative thinking.

Robert H. N. responded promptly with donations to the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and University of British Columbia Hospital (UBC) Foundation. "It was not my decision actually," he said. "It was decided by the doctors."

The Research Centre, which opened in 2011, has enabled numerous teams to be housed together in a dedicated research environment. The seven-storey building, almost 70,000 square feet in area, is equipped with state-of-the-art labs and equipment. Just as important, the facility has been specifically designed to encourage interaction and fresh thinking among the 300 scientists, clinicians and staff who work there. The high level of achievement expected from those in the Research Centre is shown in the partners supporting the building of the facility along with Mr Ho: the federal government, the province of British Columbia, Vancouver Coastal Health and the University of British Columbia faculty of medicine. The provincial government contributed CAD\$22.5 million to the project. Stakeholders, including patients locally and worldwide, have not been disappointed.

Vancouver Prostate Centre: the globally renowned centre conducts basic and translational exploration, clinical trials, socio-behavioural studies, and

complementary and alternative medicine research, and it is the largest programme of its kind in Canada. Prostate cancer is the leading cancer in males in British Columbia and Canada (excluding certain skin cancers), and the second most common in men globally. The new building enabled the Prostate Centre to expand. Exciting advances include a blood test to optimise individual prostate cancer treatment (*Clinical Cancer Research*) and ground-breaking work on the PEG10 gene as a therapeutic target for neuroendocrine prostate cancer (*Cell Reports*).

OVCARE: the internationally recognised ovarian cancer research programme was previously divided between Vancouver General Hospital and the British Columbia Cancer Agency. With the opening of the Research Centre, researchers could be brought together. In addition, the programme was located within the Vancouver Prostate Centre, fostering daily encounters between scientific teams and activating potential for collaborative discovery. Among OVCARE breakthroughs is the understanding that ovarian cancer is not a disease but it comprises many distinct subtypes. A later finding showed the most common type of ovarian cancer starts in the fallopian tubes. This is leading to changes in surgical conventions for procedures such as hysterectomies.

Centre for Hip Health and Mobility: a permanent home has enabled researchers and expert clinicians from different fields to explore cutting-edge implementation of approaches to the alleviation of arthritis, osteoporosis and fall-related fractures. Generally, falls have been found to cause more than 95% of hip fractures in seniors. Over 20% of those who suffer a hip fracture die within one year. The Centre's evidence-based model

targets those at greatest risk, providing a personal fall risk profile that identifies root causes. It then works with patients, their families and medical specialists on prevention.

The Greta and Robert H. N. Ho Centre for Psychiatry and Education (The HOpe Centre)

Walk into the light, airy, and contemporary lobby of The HOpe Centre at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver, Canada, and you may feel you are stepping into a hotel rather than a healthcare facility, especially one dealing with mental health and addictions. This is not only the view of Robert H. N., for whom the centre is named. It is also the perspective of people in the surrounding neighbourhood, who regularly visit the Centre's social enterprise coffee shop for breakfast and lunch on its sunny patio.

The four-storey Centre opened in 2014 following a community-wide campaign that saw Lions Gate Hospital Foundation raise funds for the new facility, with Robert H. N. and wife Greta donating a significant amount. The provincial government provided the remaining support. The integrated facility, combining a 26-bed inpatient psychiatric unit and mental health outpatient services, is striking in its visibility. Large windows are a major feature, echoing the architectural intention to show the world that there is nothing to hide about mental illness. Indeed, with statistics indicating that one in five people of working age across industrialised nations is affected – and one in four, including addictions – it now appears imperative to bring mental health issues into the open. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD) has estimated that mental health costs total 3.5% of GDP. For those staying at the Vancouver facility, all rooms are individual and ensuite, providing privacy and tranquillity. There are communal spaces for meetings and family conversations, and a picturesque upper-level outdoor area, all making the most of exterior views. Another interesting feature is the building houses additional services. Some are related; for example, the family resource centre on mental health issues. Others are not directly linked, such as the ambulance station and University of British Columbia education centre for student doctors, but they help ensure that the Centre serves as a diverse hub, harmonising it further with the wider community.

The HOpe Centre is living up to its name for its clients and the community. In an early comparative study, remarkable data emerged from tracking conditions over six weeks in the former facility – a rundown building constructed in 1929 – and six weeks in the new building. Areas such as extra medication, people leaving without being discharged, security and police calls, and code whites (aggressive outbursts by patients) saw a 60%-70% reduction across the board. "I had speculated that there would be modest gains in efficiency but I was shocked by how much has been achieved," Dr Allan Burgmann, Medical Leader for Inpatient Psychiatry at Lions Gate Hospital, said. "Our lengths of stay are far shorter now. People get better far more rapidly here and the efficiency has benefited both our region as well as Vancouver proper because we can now help out other hospitals when they are running over-capacity."

In a similar way to his donation to the Vancouver General Hospital, Robert H. N. had

earlier asked a group of doctors he knew to tell him what was really needed at Lions Gate. They unanimously said a new mental health building. But given the perceived stigma attached to this medical area, there was concern that the community would not get behind such a fund-raising objective. His reply: "Right, I'll do it."

He went to visit the old building, found it a depressing experience, and knew immediately a new facility was desperately needed. His gift set a record for a single donation for Lions Gate Hospital Foundation. It also proceeded to inspire more than 5,000 other donors to make their contributions, ranging from children holding school bake sales to companies. Instead of the anticipated several years of hard campaigning, the Foundation surpassed its HOpe Centre target in just 12 months.

Just as remarkable was the discussion within the community that the fund-raising drive produced. Far from shying away from mental health issues, there was a sharing of experiences and a response to awareness-raising presentations that surprised and delighted the fund-raising team and medical staff at Lions Gate. Robert H. N. has been equally delighted, knowing from his visits to The HOpe Centre coffee shop, and the impact it has had at a community level. In recognition of such impact, in 2017 he was honoured as one of 150 Leading Canadians for Mental Health, a national initiative organised by the Centre for Addition and Mental Health (CAMH) to celebrate "CAMH Difference Makers", people who are changing the mental health landscape in Canada. The Centre is the country's leading teaching hospital in the field and a world-leading research institution.

Lions Gate Hospital Foundation President Judy Savage noted: "The gift (from Robert H. N.) was a catalyst in a number of ways. It has not only transformed how we deliver mental health services but also how we talk about mental health."

"It is a really warm welcoming centre for the community. Everyone blends in here."

The Robert H. N. Ho Enhancing Patient Care Fund

You are lying in a hospital emergency department waiting and waiting to be taken out of the bright lights and into a proper room. When you are finally found a bed, you are then kept awake all night by a fellow patient continuously pressing the call button because no one can speak her language to understand what she needs. For Robert H. N., such a hospital encounter brought personal understanding of the difficulties faced by nurses and hospital staff amid resource constraints. It happened in Vancouver, Canada, but it could have taken place in many locations around the world, where governments are striving to balance budgets or to keep the spiralling costs of healthcare, medical treatment and ageing populations in line with other social priorities.

At the time, it was not a cheerful encounter. More happily, the end result – the launch of the innovative Robert H. N. Ho Enhancing Patient Care Fund in October 2014 – is now an inspiring talking point and a springboard for change. In addition to Vancouver Coastal Health, one of the regional health authorities in the province of British Columbia, the novel form of philanthropy is providing a model for other

healthcare regions. The multi-year gift from Robert H. N. and Greta is an investment in the human capital of the healthcare system. What makes the Fund distinctive is that it concentrates on the vital role played by frontline professionals and provision of best care to patients rather than focusing the attention on doctors.

It was Robert H. N. who opened discussions with the Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and University of British Columbia (UBC) Hospital Foundation. Several rounds of talks followed and gradually a way forward was determined. The Fund would support education and professional development for nurses and allied health professionals across the Vancouver Coastal Health region, as well as recruitment and retention of quality health professionals.

Figures from Vancouver General Hospital alone, which handles over 27,000 in-patient visits, 40 outpatient clinics, more than 90,000 emergency department visits and 23,000 outpatient and inpatient surgical cases annually, show the huge number of patients set to benefit from enhanced care environments. Matching funds were provided by Vancouver General Hospital, Lions Gate Hospital Foundation and other related institutions.

Barbara Grantham, President and CEO of VHG & UGC Hospital Foundation, worked with Robert H. N. in setting up the Enhancing Patient Care Fund. "It's an unusual gift in philanthropy because it is harder to measure and touch," she said. "I think it really speaks to Mr Ho's imagination and ability to think creatively about his philanthropy and his willingness to trust that the beneficiary will do good with the funds."

Fortuitously, the discussions coincided with Vancouver Coastal Health's wish to widely adopt a pioneering but costly UK enabling system. The programme trains and frees up frontline caregiving teams from time-consuming administrative tasks in order to focus more on patients. The Releasing Time to Care programme became the first initiative of the ground-breaking five-pillar Enhancing Patient Care Fund strategy, developed over 2013-2014.

The five pillars are:

Releasing Time to Care: a unit-based programme for frontline staff, helping them to free up time from administrative duties to improve patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Quality Academy Sponsorship: assists professional development of leaders of quality improvement initiatives.

<u>Conferences:</u> sponsored annually by Vancouver General Hospital to provide continuing education for nurses and allied professionals.

Scholarship and Bursary Fund: for nurses and allied professionals to gain education in specialised areas.

Innovation through Quality Improvement and Research: assists point-of-care staff to propose and conduct research, facilitated through mentorship.

Given the less tangible nature of the donation's focus, in comparison with funding a building, for example, a new framework for accountability and success indicators had to be put in place. Robert H. N. also retained a retired medical director to attend meetings and provide reports on Fund-related activities.

In 2017, a second initiative extended the reach of the Enhancing Patient Care Fund to Vancouver Coastal Health's Palliative Approach to Care programme. This supports increased expertise and improvements in provision of end-of-life care through the hiring of specialised palliative care clinical leaders to educate relevant healthcare colleagues across the regional health authority's Communities of Care.

With professional development and training budgets severely hit by changing financial priorities for the government, Robert H. N. Ho Enhancing Patient Care Fund donation opened a new door for healthcare institutions. It offered a way to fund the essential "software" innovations to keep health professionals advancing in line with fast-moving times, technology and care system developments. "We use Mr Ho's donation as a poster child to encourage other health authorities in British Columbia to adopt a similar model in order to get such professional enhancement in place," Grantham said. "Philanthropy is becoming the vehicle of change and innovation for the modernisation of the healthcare system. It is harder for our government to allocate resources to items such as human capital investment and research that may have a longer pay-off period and, increasingly, that is where philanthropy comes into play."

Robert H. N. and wife Greta received the 2014 Leadership Award from VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation in recognition of the inspiration they provide and their contributions. "Mr Ho is respected for his breadth of vision and creativity as a philanthropist in healthcare and beyond," Grantham said. "Most people who know him understand that he is driven by ideas. Whether it is a passion and belief that the arts can transcend difference and bridge cultures or the importance of well-being, both mental and physical, it manifests in how he expresses his philanthropy."

Family Foundation

Chinese Arts & Culture

"With so much talk about business and politics, we wanted to provide more opportunities for people to discover how Chinese culture has contributed before and can today contribute to the understanding of the world around us"

- Robert H. N. Ho

International Programmes

The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation's vision of promoting cross-cultural understanding and tolerance through wider appreciation of Chinese arts and culture has brought a series of major exhibitions of past treasures and contemporary arts to millions of people via leading international museums. "There are 5,000 years of traditional

Chinese arts," Robert H. N. said. "There is also tremendous creativity in the contemporary Chinese arts scene, within China and among Chinese artists in other locations."

Exhibitions supported by the Foundation have brought together museums and Asian art experts from different parts of the globe through loaning and showcasing artefacts and modern pieces. These include engaging with some of the world's very best institutions in Beijing (Palace Museum), Shanghai (Shanghai Museum), London (British Museum), the US (Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York) and Canada (Royal Ontario Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts). Funded displays have ranged from China's Terracotta Army and Ming Dynasty court arts to the explosive gunpowder vision of avant-garde artist Cai Guoqiang and newly commissioned work by artists from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, including Beijing-based creator Wang Jianwei.

In line with the Foundation's other core mission to build wider understanding of Buddhist insights, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art at London's Victoria and Albert Museum provide a permanent venue to display such works (see panel). In addition, major exhibitions on Buddhist art are funded at other locations, such as *Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road* at The Getty Center in Los Angeles in 2016 and *Encountering the Buddha: Art & Practice Across Asia*, a three-year exhibition at the Freer | Sackler Galleries, launched in autumn 2017.

Buddhist Art Victoria and Albert Musuem, London

A mong the Ho family's philanthropic initiatives to advance wider understanding of Buddhist art and traditions is The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Supported by a grant from the Foundation and opened in 2009, the display area provides the first permanent space devoted to Buddhist art in the UK museum world, creating an engaging pathway for the east to speak to the west on one of its most influential philosophies.

The inclusion of the Buddhist-centred displays illustrating different practices and works from various Asian locations has fostered both the museum and the Foundation's aims by drawing a greater diversity of visitors into the V&A Museum, including more people from Asia and the Buddhist community. Exhibits are shown without cases wherever possible to bring them closer to the viewers. Additional activities help to enhance understanding. Publications and online access widen the displays' reach.

In the western museum world, the V&A's new lens have enabled Buddhist works to be viewed in a more cross-cultural, comparative and holistic way than those tended to

happen in the past. The approach has been critically noted by peers, art history media and Buddhist studies colleagues, Beth McKillop, V&A's former Deputy Director and Director of Collections, said. For V&A conservators, the Buddhist galleries have brought an opportunity to research and study works from outside the western tradition in order to engage in conservation sympathetic to the original context in which pieces were created.

The question of religion within a secular museum with a mission to inspire artists and designers was also important to address from the outset. By raising the pieces to waist level or above, respect for the sacred nature of the objects could be shown. Objectivity was stressed in interpretative panels and labels. When the works first went on show in 2009, Robert H. N. made the Foundation's view clear in an interview with the *Financial Times* newspaper: "We are not out there to be missionaries. We just want to show the arts," he said.

Footnote (1):

Dr John Clarke's essay, "Planning the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Gallery of Buddhist Sculpture 2009-2014", appeared in Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces, Exhibiting Asian Religions in Museums, edited by Bruce M. Sullivan (New York and London, Bloomsbury 2015).

As well as serving as an involved sponsor, the Foundation works with institutions on developing exhibitions through the provision of planning grants. However, curatorial decisions are left to museums. In addition, the Foundation is rigorous in working to global standards of management and decision-making in its philanthropy and funding. "There is no linkage to business interests, not an iota," Foundation Chief Executive Officer Ted Lipman said.

In 2013, the Foundation stepped into commissioning contemporary Chinese art in a pioneering project with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chinese Art Initiative has involved three commission-based exhibitions by significant Chinese contemporary artists over four years, starting from 2014. These works will later move into the Guggenheim's permanent collection to form part of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Collection.

Support from the Foundation has sought to free the artists from the demands of the market, allowing them to focus solely on what they want to say and how they want to say it. At the same time, the Guggenheim setting and its mandate of internationalism enables the works to be both part of the contemporary Chinese art scene and a global conversation that is not just about being Chinese. The first show featured a three-part exhibition by Wang called *Time Temple* in 2014, involving painting, sculptural installation, film and a two-part performance work. The second, *Tales of Our Time*, was a thematic group show, held in 2016 and organised by global arts curators Hou

Hanru and Xiaoyu Weng. The two curators will also steer the third exhibition in 2018.

By entering the museum's collection, the works becomes a legacy to be studied and engaged with in perpetuity, Dr Alexandra Munroe, Samsung Senior Curator of Asian Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, said. They will be used by future generations of curators at the Guggenheim, borrowed by other museums around the world, and appear on the museum's website.

The aim in every exhibition supported by the Foundation is to provide opportunities for learning and interactive engagement, not just viewing, in line with its mission to enhance intercultural understanding. Such activities might include talks, videos, storytelling, multimedia guides, teacher workshops, student tours, among others. There is a particular focus on activities related to younger people.

For Robert H. N., the overall objective is to expand people's world view by helping them to enjoy the story behind the displays and add fresh perspectives on ways of life and cultural connections. "If Chinese arts is a mystery to many, we are trying to give people a glimpse into that world and encourage further exploration. It might be centuries ago. It might be right now, this minute. The goal is to bring people together to see the way we are all connected through time."

Hong Kong Programmes

In Hong Kong, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation's home town, an array of dynamic and thought-provoking arts and cultural projects are supported. These range from programmes organised with some of the city's most established artistic groups and administrative bodies, such as the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hong Kong government's Leisure and Cultural Services Department (conservator US exchange programme), to enterprising activities run by smaller organisations that find novel ways to examine residents' relationship to their city's history and culture, or to explore the creative power of the arts in business-oriented, pragmatic Hong Kong.

In both arenas, the Foundation's focus is to provide opportunities to enhance appreciation of the arts, extend awareness of the arts' ability to transcend people's everyday life and provide openings for people to actually experience how creativity can impact self-development.

Projects for young and old, parents and children are funded to foster talent at different stages of life and show that arts can reach out to and involve everyone. One ground-breaking activity, launched in 2009, was *Leap!*, Hong Kong's first large-scale movement education programme for nursery school children between the ages of four and six. This was offered together with Cloud Gate Dance School of Taiwan and sought to utilise dance as a teaching medium to ignite youngsters' innate creativity rather than training professional dancers. Over the years it has reached thousands of children in Hong Kong.

Through "Arts: Transforming Hong Kong", launched in 2013, the Foundation provides grants for community-based projects that link up artists with other social groups, especially marginalised sectors of Hong Kong and students. The groups work together to increase engagement, preserve collective memory and strengthen cultural heritage.

Other Foundation grant-making enables local organisations to reach outside Hong Kong. The Design and Cultural Studies Workshop in Hong Kong has collaborated with the Foundation since 2008 on a series of award-winning publications and displays entitled *We All Live in the Forbidden City*. This project seeks to widen knowledge of life in China's imperial home to 24 emperors. It includes books published using traditional characters and simplified Chinese characters, English and other languages, a 100-episode documentary series, and an education outreach programme. *We All Live in the Forbidden City* activities have taken place in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and North America.

The Foundation has also helped to introduce young audience in and outside Hong Kong to Kun Opera, which is among the oldest forms of traditional Chinese opera and listed among UNESCO's "masterpieces of the oral and intangible cultural heritage of humanity". In 2008, the Foundation supported performances and lectures by Suzhou Kunqu Opera Theatre of Jiangsu and Shanghai Kunqu Opera Troupe for university and secondary school students in Hong Kong, together with the University of Hong Kong. A sponsored Kunqu Tour to Taiwan took place in 2009. In addition to performances, actors provided a series of talks for students and members of the public.

Buddhist Learning Network

"My ambition has been to see centres of Buddhist studies in universities and, gradually, one by one, to develop a link between them, forming a Buddhist knowledge network"

- Robert H. N. Ho

Robert H. N. has harboured the goal of creating a global Buddhist network of scholars from the early days of his philanthropy, seeking to make Buddhism to be more widely understood worldwide. He knows from his own experience how difficult it can be. Although introduced to Buddhism as a child by his grandmother Lady Clara, he had a non-practising period in his young to middle ages, finding the doctrines hard to fathom and reconcile with today's world. Keen to widen discussion from the often esoteric world of Buddhist studies to the contemporary and cross-disciplinary studies at major universities, he has worked to provide a variety of opportunities related to the field at leading institutions around the world. The philanthropy is rigorously non-sectarian.

The initial spur was an endowment to the University of Hong Kong, made through Tung Lin Kok Yuen in 2001. "The University approached me to help establish its Centre of Buddhist Studies, which at the time was the first of its kind in Hong Kong. I thought it was a good idea and Tung Lin Kok Yuen became a founding donor," Robert H. N. said. This was followed by endowments from Tung Lin Kok Yuen

in Hong Kong to the International Buddhist College of Thailand in 2004 and the University of Toronto in 2006; and Tung Lin Kok Yuen in Canada also donated to the University of British Columbia in 2005.

With the founding of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, more institutions were included: Harvard and Stanford universities in the United States and the Courtauld Institute of Art in the UK. The Foundation has also initiated an innovative Buddhist studies funding programme, setting up dissertation and postdoctoral fellowships, research and collaborative research fellowships and new professorships to help individual Buddhist scholars during their academic journeys. The programme is administered through the American Council of Learned Societies. In 2014, the earlier Canadian programmes were renamed, bringing them under the Foundation to form one cohesive network.

The Courtauld Institute of Art

In 2012, the Foundation announced an endowment to set up The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Art and Conservation at The Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Since then, one of the Centre's main projects has been to establish and run a master's programme in Buddhist Art: History and Conservation. The ground-breaking degree is the UK's first integrated programme for Buddhist studies, history of art and conservation. It is run in collaboration with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and University of London, with additional teaching provided by guest

scholars. The Centre has also set up a library for Asian art and provides free lectures and conferences that reach out to specialists, students and the public.

The Courtauld is a global leader in art history and conservation. Under director Dr Deborah Swallow, who arrived in 2004, the Institute has sought to build greater engagement with the cultures of Asia, alongside its traditional western art focus. The Ho Centre was in the vanguard of this move, according to its director, Professor David Park, who also heads the Courtauld's Wall Painting Department.

A key objective of the MA programme is to enhance the preservation of Buddhist art by extending students' knowledge beyond conservation to the history and principles of Buddhism, its art history and religion to help determine the best approach to preserving heritage items. This is assisted through on-site explorations in locations such as the Forbidden City in Beijing, and Dunhuang in northwest China, home to the famous Mogao cave art paintings. Such fieldwork, made possible by Foundation funding, gives students from both east and west a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding of the needs, challenges and significance of their studies.

Scholarships allow students from emerging economies to apply for the MA programme despite the high cost of studying in London. The MA's global intake has thus ranged from Nepal and Bhutan to China and France. Graduates have moved on to a variety of opportunities: a lectureship in Asian art in the US, a prestigious Daiwa scholarship from the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, an internship at the

Smithsonian, digitalising a photo library in Nepal through a British Library grant, and a job with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

Stanford University

In 2008, the Foundation provided an endowment to establish The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Center for Buddhist Studies at Stanford University, followed in 2011 by a further grant to endow a Chair in Buddhist Studies. The chair professorship marked the first permanent faculty post dedicated to Buddhism at the university, with Professor John Kieschnick becoming the Founding Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Professor of Buddhist Studies.

While there is a long tradition of Buddhist studies at Stanford, Professor Kieschnick noted an important difference that such a post makes: "It means perpetuity. There will always be Buddhist studies at Stanford at this level of seniority as the chair is earmarked." This is unusual, he said. In other institutions, there is no guarantee that a person teaching Buddhist studies will be replaced by someone with a similar specialty. "There are just a handful of chairs like this around the world. Nothing is permanent, according to Buddhist principles, but this is about as good as it gets in academia." Being located at Stanford, the position has given Professor Kieschnick access to excellent graduate students. In addition, it provides the funding support necessary to offer studentships and the time to train them. "It is often challenging to take up Buddhist studies," he said. "Funding is a struggle and competition intense for a very

small number of government grants. Students are under intense pressure to complete their degrees quickly. Yet they usually need to study very difficult languages, such as Pali and Sanskrit, modern and classical Chinese or Japanese, and it is impossible to do this well in a short period of time."

The Center teaches graduate students with the goal of expanding the number of Buddhist studies specialists who will go on to teach all over the world in a variety of institutions. It also encourages undergraduates to gain basic understanding of Buddhism. Such students are often outside the humanities area, given Stanford students' current concentration on engineering. The Center helps create greater awareness of Buddhism among young people heading into different fields.

Events organised by the Center and open to the public create a wider forum for discussion of Buddhism and its principles. "Part of our mission is to make Buddhism less exotic and more comtemporary, and to promote general understanding of Buddhism, not just in the university but in society at large," Professor Kieschnick said.

Harvard University

In 2011, a grant from the Foundation was given to a new Buddhist Ministry Initiative at Harvard Divinity School to create greater understanding of Buddhist philosophy and to support training of future Buddhist religious professionals in pastoral care. The eight-year programme enables field education of Buddhist ministry in hospitals

and other care sites and modern training for Buddhist clergy; and it introduces non-Christian tradition studies for Master of Divinity degree candidates.

Harvard Divinity School is regarded as a leader in the academic study of religion, adopting a global outlook for its revised Master of Divinity curriculum in 2004 and making a concerted effort to create an environment in which students preparing to minister different religious traditions could study together and share perspectives.

The innovative training, the first at a divinity school within a research university, enables the Harvard ministry programme to extend its reach through greater input from Buddhist literature, thought and practices, while Buddhist ministry students gain from learning more about socially engaged ministering and care. The Foundation funding supports coursework in Buddhist ministry studies and lectures, field education and conferences.

The Buddhist Ministry Initiative also seeks to engage with the Buddhist communities in Asia and to share understanding of social services and action being developed in line with Buddhist values east and west.

University of British Columbia (UBC)

At the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, the first Buddhist studies

programme in North America to specifically mandate a focus on modern and contemporary society is underway. The Ho family connection with the University began in 2005 with a Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation endowment to establish the programme. Robert H. N. later expanded this support through establishing the Tung Lin Kok Yuen Canada Foundation Chair in Buddhism and Contemporary Society in 2009. Dr Jessica Main was selected as the Founding Chair Professor.

The permanent position, set up in perpetuity, was renamed The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Chair in Buddhism and Contemporary Society in 2014. "The programme's presence at UBC will mean a continual focus on Buddhist studies," said Dr Main. Foundation programme funding supports undergraduate and postgraduate teaching and other expenses.

To foster greater practical impact and encourage students to reflect on the role of religion in Canadian and local society, Dr Main is keen to incorporate active community service into the academic component of her courses. She has been talking to Buddhist groups involved in such activities in the public and non-profit sectors.

Until recently, career prospects for Buddhist scholars dictated that studies focused on scriptures, philosophy and traditions, within religious studies, Asian studies or anthropology departments, Dr Main said. In the first decade of the new millennium, the field broadened and Buddhism began being incorporated into different

disciplines, including neuroscience (clinical studies and meditation), social history and others. She sees Robert H. N.'s support for UBC's contemporary programme as an early pioneer in this regard. "His openness has allowed UBC to do something different. This willingness is really interesting and rare," she said.

American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS)

Since 2013, the Foundation has made available a series of grants to individual Buddhist scholars at different stages of their studies. The programme is designed to provide the vital financial support to help those interested in exploring the Buddhist world in its many different forms to pursue and continue their studies, ranging from graduate students finishing dissertations to postdoctoral fellowships, research and collaborative research fellowships and professorships. Rather than placing these awards in specific institutions, the enterprising programme makes such funding available to scholars working on relevant issues at the requisite standard anywhere in the world. This way, the Foundation can reach out globally to Buddhist scholars and at the same time foster a "fellowship community" among awardees.

To administer the fellowships, the Foundation works together with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), a non-profit federation of scholarly societies focused on the advancement of the humanities and highly experienced in the administration of fellowship grants.

The Foundation's fellowship awards programme has been "absolutely collaborative" in its creation, with meetings convened with scholars in the field to make sure the awards were what was needed, according to ACLS President Dr Pauline Yu, who became a member of the Foundation's board in 2014. Applications must be in English but research can be carried out in any language and on any topic, historical or contemporary. Vitally, the awards also help to keep Buddhist scholars studying, she noted. "Such fellowships offer crucial support to enable students to finish their work, especially in dissertation writing, which may end up not being completed due to lack of funding."

More than 90 scholars have benefited from the four calls for applications up to 2017, with grants going to applicants at universities in Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and North America, among others, and grantees hailing from around the world. Classical Buddhist studies, Buddhism and modernity across the South China Sea, and Buddhist social work in 20th century Japan are just some of the areas being explored.

ACLS has worked with numerous foundations. The difference in working with the Ho Foundation is the personal interest shown in activities by Robert H. N., Dr Yu said. "This is different from most of our other foundation relationships, which might turn cold after decades of establishment." At the same time, however, there is full understanding that Robert H. N. will be hands-off on decision-making on awardees, which is done by peer-review.

A key aspect of the fellowship programme is the building of a network linking individual scholars and senior scholars in the field. The first major link is the annual symposium for dissertation fellows, organised by ACLS and inaugurated at the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2015. "The global network is interesting because it is not so much about creating Buddhist scholarship elsewhere but recognising it is in fact being undertaken everywhere and bringing those people together," Dr Yu said.

Robert H. N., who attended the UBC symposium and talked with the young scholars there, is also optimistic that the gathering is finally enabling his long-held dream of a global Buddhist community of scholars to move closer to realisation. "I keep pushing for a network. With the symposium, I feel we have now got it going," Robert H. N. said.

Media and Buddhism Buddhistdoor

"A multimedia news website is a wonderful way to link up the Buddhist community across the world as well as show the world at large that Buddhism is moving with the times and has much greater relevance to society than mindfulness alone"

- Robert H. N. Ho

p a steep winding road, hidden behind the main streets of Hong Kong's busy
Tsuen Wan new town and atop a small hill, a historic monastery and temple is

home to a thoroughly modern online portal that is opening up the understanding of Buddhism and its relevance to everyday life worldwide.

At Wang Fat Ching She, aptly translated as "a place from which the Dharma is spread" and located at the picturesquely named 9½ Milestone, Castle Peak Road, Robert H. N.'s aim to sustain and extend the Buddhist legacy of grandmother Lady Clara and his experience as a journalist have combined in the form of the popular non-profit Buddhistdoor news website (www.buddhistdoor.net).

Online pioneer

The site was first launched in 1995, making it a pioneer of internet publishing. The portal is now one of the largest and most visited sites of its kind, drawing nearly 500,000 unique visitors every month. It provides original news and features on a wide range of topical subjects related to the Buddhist community as well as serving as a platform for Buddhist perspectives on current events and world issues.

The initial site was established in Vancouver, sponsored first by Tung Lin Kok Yuen, Canada Society and later by Tung Lin Kok Yuen in Hong Kong. In the website's earliest days, the goal was mainly to bring greater awareness of Buddhism to English-language audiences. When the site moved its base to Hong Kong in 2006, it started to extend its reach. The website now comes under The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation's umbrella.

Non-sectarian global awareness

While Buddhistdoor is not the only Buddhist online media platform, it is distinctive in its combination of non-sectarianism and multiple global perspectives, rather than focusing on readers in one particular Buddhist tradition or region of the world. The site employs two separate editorial teams of Chinese language (佛門網) and English language journalists (Buddhistdoor Global), with 90% of contents created specifically for their individual sites. Chinese content is available in both traditional and simplified characters. News issues have tackled Buddhist views of the migrant crisis in Europe in 2015 and climate change. Features have included Buddhist spirituality, engagement in society, meditation, art and personal development. The role of women in Buddhism has been a particular focus.

Meeting the different interests of readers around the world is a key challenge. Visitors from the US may want to read about meditation, while those from Chinese communities worldwide are more drawn to human interest features involving Buddhists. To address this, content is regionally organised on the website, with freelance writers based in individual locations providing articles from their respective communities. Stories that do appeal to all readers mainly involve internationally renowned personalities, such as Buddhist nun, teacher and writer Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo. In addition, a growing presence on social media is helping the site reach out, including its registration in 2015 on Sina Weibo in China. Weibo provides a service similar to a combined Twitter and Facebook and has tens of millions of daily users.

As a former reporter and editor, Robert H. N. takes a keen interest in the sophisticated multimedia site available today, given its exciting capability to reframe Buddhism in a more contemporary context. However, there is a hands-off approach regarding editorial content, according to editorial chief executive K. C. Lum.

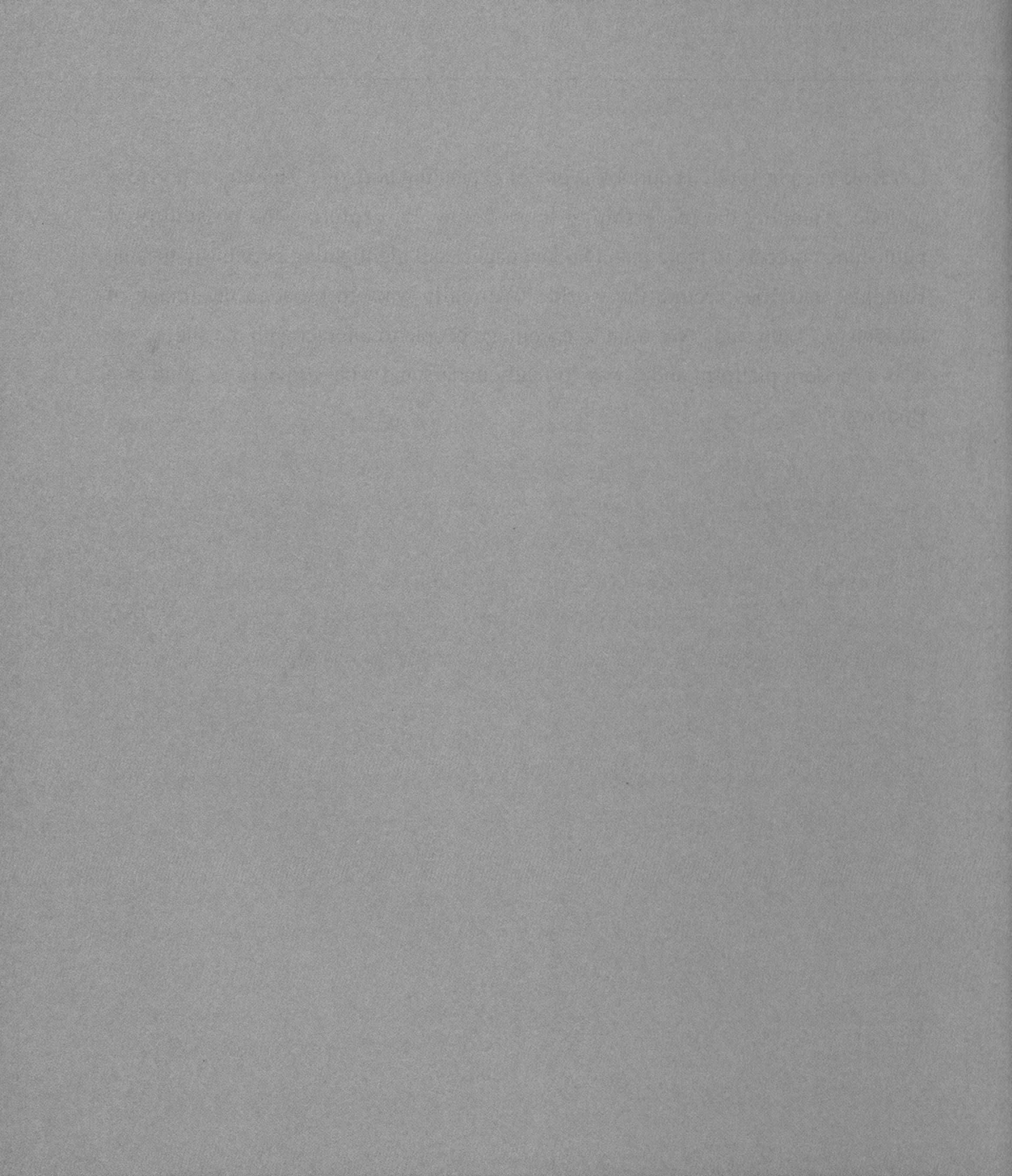
Borderless Buddhism

Another aspect of the borderless Buddhism that the site embraces is a willingness to engage in interfaith dialogue. One such event, organised by Buddhist Door, was a seminar in Hong Kong in 2015 focused on love and peace and involving Buddhist, Muslim and Christian participants. The event was co-hosted by Turkey's Anatolia Cultural & Dialogue Centre and the Centre of Buddhist Studies at The University of Hong Kong, which is part of the scholarly Buddhist network in renowned academic institutions around the world supported by Tung Lin Kok Yuen and The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.

Lum sees Buddhist Door and the academic network highly complementary. Activities and events at the Buddhist network institutions, particularly those related to modern practices, are reported and featured on Buddhist Door. This creates a platform for exchange within the network and at the same time widens awareness of the centres worldwide.

While Buddhist Door is rooted physically at Wang Fat Ching She, donated to Tung

Lin Kok Yuen in 1960, its outlook is one of expanding horizons. Those new horizons include extending the readership to those below 25, exploring the possibility of publishing contents in more than two languages, and highlighting previously unsung Buddhist activities around the world. "We really want to broaden the image of Buddhism," Lum said. "We want to encourage people to interact with the site, to see it as a modern platform and a way to really understand what it means to think as a Buddhist."



Chapter 5 −×≫≪≫-

A Quartet of Speeches
Inspiring Change

Opening Ceremony

Interdisciplinary Science Center Colgate University, US

9 October 2007

President Chopp, Fellow Colgate Belongers and Friends:

Fifty-one years ago, on that sunny Graduation Day on 11 June 1956, when all the smiles and elation had abated, I remembered an old Chinese proverb: jam2 seoi2 si1 jyun 4(飲水思源), literally: "Drink water; consider source." In other words: "After you have drunk water, don't forget the well that gave it to you."

This saying has a particular meaning for me, reflecting as it does the philosophy of my grandfather – Robert Ho Tung – who, through his own hard work and the inspiration of a dedicated teacher, transcended his modest beginnings to become Sir Robert Ho Tung. Knighted twice, by King George V of England and by the present Queen Elizabeth II, my grandfather, throughout his long life, was equally active as a businessman and a philanthropist in what was then the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

My grandfather taught us that we must never take our family's good fortune for granted. His motto, repeated often to his children and grandchildren, was: "Before you can receive, you must learn how to give." In a sense, therefore, the Ho Science Center is as much a memorial to my grandfather and his precepts as it is a gift to Colgate University. His words echoed in my mind on that long-ago graduation day when I asked myself:

"Now that Colgate has given this student from Hong Kong an excellent education, valuable practical knowledge and a taste of American life, what can I give back to my school?"

That question has remained with me, and over the years, I have gladly done what I could to support Colgate. Then, in 2003, President Rebecca Chopp came to me with a bold prediction and a far-sighted proposal. Her prediction: advances in science will predominate in the 21st century – not only in academia but in the world. Her proposal: the establishment of a world-class interdisciplinary science facility at Colgate University.

She convinced me.

Standing around me is the result: the realisation of President Chopp's vision, and a structure whose magnificent design owes many of its best features to the invaluable

participation of the late, and sadly missed, Professor Charlie McClennen.

The Science Center incorporates the best ideas of all the disciplines it will house, and is capped by a dome so hi-tech that it has its own computer programs built into it. With an area of 100,000 square feet, it is three times larger than any other academic building on campus. It has a Class 10,000 clean-room for nanotechnology research; a five-chamber greenhouse; and it houses five interdisciplinary science departments, together with offices, classrooms and a 90-seat lecture hall. It also has seven teaching labs and 40 research laboratories, many of which are so technologically sophisticated that they will no doubt make other liberal arts colleges very envious.

I am honoured indeed that Colgate's new Science Center bears my family name. However, the building is just that: only a building... made of bricks and mortar. The building – and the cutting-edge scientific equipment it contains – are, alas, the sort of things that in our fast-moving world can become obsolete in a relatively short time. So, though I have delivered the bricks and mortar to Colgate, I believe the real gift – the most enduring gift – is the use to which the faculty and students of Colgate will put this new building.

President Chopp, fellow Colgate belongers and friends, it is my hope that our new Science Center will provide a valuable learning environment for Colgate students as

they explore the ever-growing challenges modern science presents – an environment ideally suited to advance knowledge in theory and research as well as in practical application. I am confident that the progress they make in these endeavours, and the benefits society gains from their progress, will endure for many years into the future. I am proud and happy to make my contribution to that progress.

jam2 seoi2 si1 jyun 4 (飲水思源).

I drink water and I remember its source.

Opening Ceremony

Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre

Vancouver General Hospital, Canada

23 January 2011

Honourable Minister of Health, Honoured Guests, Doctors, Researchers and Scientists, and friends:

Good morning!

New knowledge is created through collaboration and the collision of ideas.

The unknown in many things, including medical science, can best be solved through interdisciplinary approaches. While much in the world is changing rapidly, these factors appear immutable.

This new health research facility, named the Robert H. N. Ho Research Centre, is built for such a purpose. That is to say, with an interdisciplinary approach where doctors and scientists of different medical fields can meet as conveniently as next-door neighbours, in this case, may be next-floor neighbours, on a regular basis to share and discuss ideas and new findings. It will give a home to people and

technology – the minds and ideas – that will change the future of people's health and healthcare. It will be a place of investigation, exploration, discussion and innovation; a place where proteomics, bioinformatics, DNA, RNA and Micro CT imaging are more than just acronyms and big words. This will be a centre for the crossover and pollination of ideas, where collaboration pushes them further than individual efforts ever could.

Where, for example, an idea pursued by prostate cancer researchers can be parlayed into the area of ovarian cancer research as well. Where the impact on enhanced mobility can mean more than stronger hips but better lives and improved health overall.

This Centre represents collaboration. My gift and the money put forward by other funders acknowledged today have allowed it to be built and equipped with incredible advanced technology. Now we need you, doctors, researchers and scientists, to make your contributions and put into action your talents. To give the world your best thoughts, your best research efforts. To show us in British Columbia, indeed the world, what you can achieve.

When you look around, you see a building, an impressive building. A building I'm proud to have my name associated with.

You may not see what will be achieved in this place in the future... but I think I can.

This is what inspired me to give.

I have fulfilled my part of the bargain. I have helped deliver this building and the equipment. The rest is up to you.

I wish you luck. We will confidently await news of your powerful discoveries and developments in prostate and ovarian cancers and hip health and mobility.

Thank you.

Conferment Ceremony

Doctor of Laws honoris causa University of British Columbia, Canada

28 May 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen:

When I was asked to speak today, I decided to focus on two sayings from my grandfather, Sir Robert Ho Tung.

First, he said: "Before you can receive, you must learn how to give."

I recognise that I have been greatly blessed. I come from a strong and successful family which brought me up to think deeply about my responsibilities in this world.

In preparation for today's speech I thought about the moments in my life that mattered to me most. I thought about the people who opened my eyes, my mind, and my heart to the possibilities in the world, the people who shared their passion and energy for life, and the people who accepted a responsibility to give.

My grandfather was born in 1862 into very different circumstances than we face

today. He grew up in colonial Hong Kong. From an early age he accepted that he had a big responsibility to fulfil. He recognised that hard work and determination would be the keys to many life opportunities.

Like all of us, my grandfather didn't have any control over the world into which he was born. He couldn't choose his parents or his country or his appearance.

But he did have control over the responsibility he would take for shaping the kind of world he would leave behind when he died. He could work to ensure there were opportunities for his children, their children, and the children of people he would never meet. He built companies and a hospital, and helped a university to expand and to modernise the society in which he lived. To do that, he devoted himself, his energy, his talent and his determination to fulfil his responsibilities to build a better world.

Before you can receive, you must learn how to give – to give fully of yourself to whatever you do. By not accepting the limited opportunities of the world into which he was born, he rose above it.

My grandfather also said: "I want to wear out. I don't want to rust out."

He wanted to leave the world having given it everything he could until he could give

no more. In other words, "to wear out" means being active and useful.

It isn't worth your time to sit around and regret the things you could have done, the people you could have met, the places you could have seen and the opportunities you could have pursued. It isn't worth your time sitting around and rusting out.

To wear out, rather than rust out, you need to act and do something.

You and I are now not only alumni of this special university, but we also carry specific knowledge about the world and its people. Whether you studied natural sciences or theoretical subjects and whether you learned a new language or a new mode of critical thinking, you have each been part of a unique process. So let's promise one another to wear out by using up all our energy. Let us take up our responsibilities to make our place, wherever it is, better than when we first landed.

I wish you a great adventure as you journey forth. Remember, before you can receive, you must learn how to give. And if your journey is great and your purpose-authentic, then "rusting out" of life won't be an option. Living fully will be your only choice.

Good luck and have a good journey.

Exhibition Opening

The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada

7 October 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A very good evening to you.

It has been over 20 years since I moved to Vancouver. Although it is now my permanent home, my family heritage lies across the Pacific in China and in Hong Kong in particular.

Vancouver, like Hong Kong, is often referred to as a gateway city. I see so many similarities between my old home town and my new one. More than ever before, closer ties are developing between China and the world, through the Vancouver gateway. Exchanges in trade and commerce and education, and exchanges of people and ideas have expanded exponentially.

But for me, an important part of any relationship, perhaps the most important aspect, is one which encourages mutual understanding and respect, and I believe nothing is more important in this regard than cultural exchange.

That is why, 10 years ago, my family decided to establish The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation to encourage global appreciation of Chinese culture. That is also why we decided to support this marvellous exhibition, *The Forbidden City: Inside the Court of China's Emperors*. First, the exhibition was held in Toronto, where the project was conceived and curated by the Royal Ontario Museum. Now in Vancouver, where the Vancouver Art Gallery is putting its own spin on these wonderful treasures, which have been generously loaned to Canada by the Palace Museum in Beijing.

In fact, our Foundation has worked closely with the Palace Museum for many years, in particular in publishing children's books, some of which we will leave with you this evening. They are now available in both traditional and simplified Chinese characters and in Korean. Lately, with the co-operation of the China Institute in New York, an English version has been published. You can even find the children's books in the Vancouver Art Gallery book store.

I hope that through this exhibition, my fellow Canadians will gain a deeper appreciation of the rich Chinese heritage which has so much to contribute to our multicultural society.

Our partner, the Vancouver Art Gallery, has developed a robust program of education and outreach which will ensure that all sectors of society, especially students and young people, will benefit from this unique exhibition.

In fact, this project can been realised through a wide-ranging collaboration among the Royal Ontario Museum, the Vancouver Art Gallery, Beijing's Palace Museum and our co-sponsor in Vancouver, China National Offshore Oil Corporation. I sincerely thank them all for their support.

I hope all of you will enjoy this evening, have a glimpse of the exhibition, and come back soon with your friends and family. Thank you all for joining us and I wish you a wonderful evening.

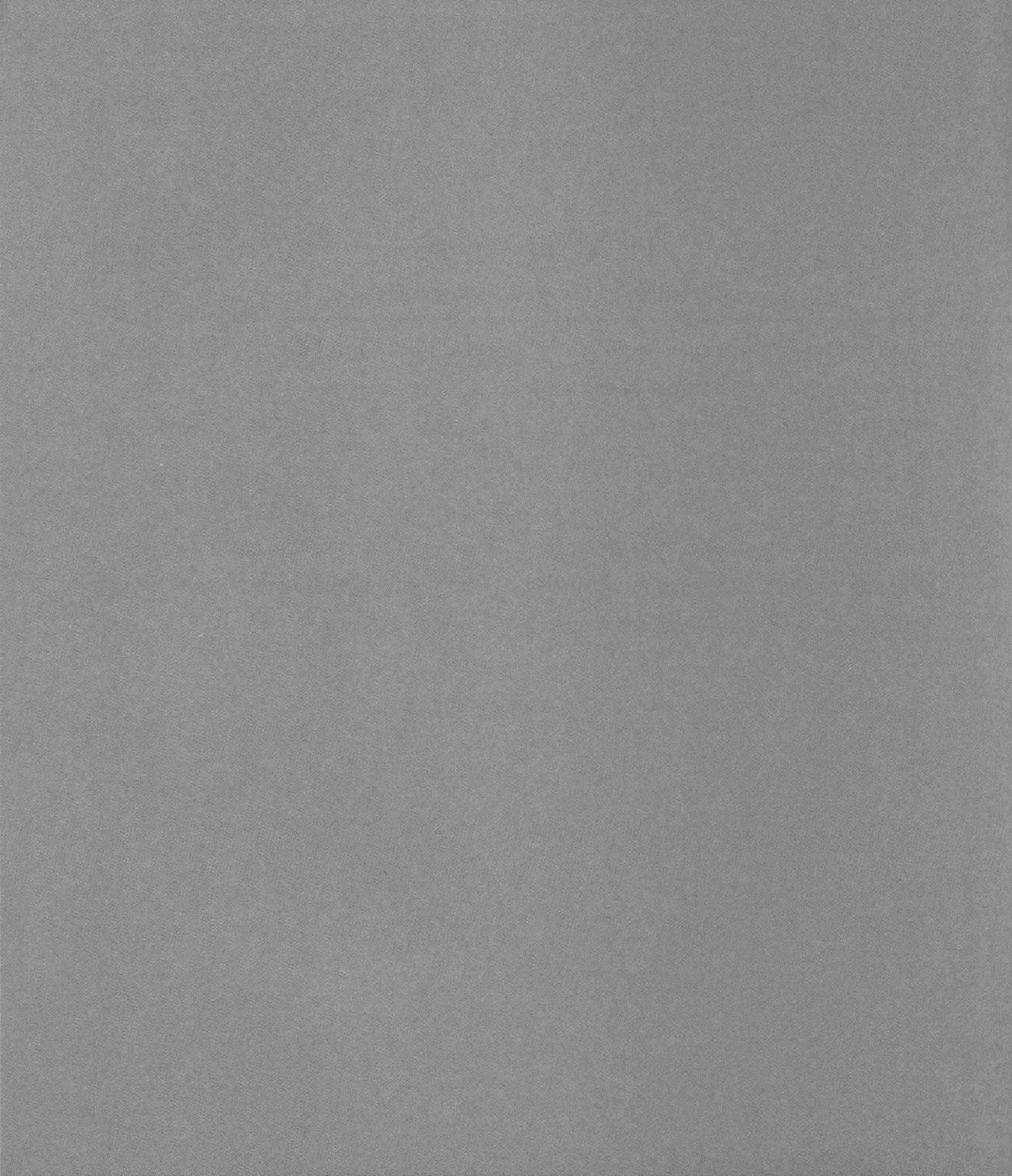
Afterword

Looking to the generations to come

The Ho family's pivotal role in Hong Kong, Chinese and international history is often belied by the down-to-earth nature in which they address their position. "We are very low-key people," Robert H. N. said. "We don't drive Ferraris and Lamborghinis. I have a Subaru. But we live happily…"

It is an outlook nurtured throughout his own life—a time span encompassing five generations from his grandfather Sir Robert, the founding patriarch born in Hong Kong, to his own grandchildren now living all over the world.

"You just need to be satisfied – and do some good."



Family History

Grandfather

Sir Robert Ho Tung

"I really admire my grandfather for rising from picking up scrap metal in the streets to his high social status. I am only third generation. He was the one who rose to the top"

- Robert H. N. Ho

1862

Born in Hong Kong to Dutch businessman Charles Bosman and Madam Sze. Robert Ho Tung is Madam Sze's eldest son.

c. 1870

Family abandoned by Bosman. Robert Ho Tung has to undertake many chores and endure poverty and hardship.

1873

Starts to attend Government Central School, Hong Kong's first public secondary school.

1878

Following graduation, wins a highly competitive position at the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, despite being the youngest candidate.

1880

Resigns in search of more exciting opportunities. Goes to work as a junior assistant compradore (local agent for a foreign company) for Jardine, Matheson & Co, a major Hong Kong conglomerate.

Marries 16-year-old Margaret Mak Sau-ying.

1883

Takes up agency for two Jardine-related companies – Hong Kong Fire Company and Canton Insurance Company. Succeeds despite advice not to take up the role.

1884

Brokers a major deal for Jardine's, saving the firm a huge amount of money. Prospers further through trading on his own account and investments in shipping and property.

1890

Becomes Jardine's head compradore.

1891

Takes Madam Chow Yee-man as a concubine and try to start a family with children as he and Margaret remain childless.

1893

Suffers severe bout of pneumonia and almost dies.

1895

Marries Margaret's first cousin Clara Cheung Lin-kok as he still has no children. Margaret arranges for Clara to be treated as a co-wife.

1897

Nominated to be the first president of the Chinese Club, set up by Chinese community leaders as the Chinese and Eurasian answer to the Hong Kong Club open solely to British men.

Shelters Chinese reformist leader Kang Youwei at his Hong Kong mansion, Idlewild, after his modernization movement fails and Kang has to flee the wrath of Empress Dowager.

1899

Closes deal for lots in Central for HK\$435,000, then the largest transaction in Hong Kong.

1900

Resigns from Jardine's post due to ill health and plan to focus on his own company.

1906

Acquires three houses in the exclusive Peak area of Hong Kong. Wife Clara and their growing family become the only non-Europeans granted permission to live there.

1908

Visits the US as H. T. Bosman and is threatened with deportation for arriving with two wives. Clara returns home.

As a prominent Hong Kong community figure, receives a mention in *Twentieth Century Impressions of Hong Kong*, *Shanghai and Other Treaty Ports of China*, published by Lloyd's.

1910-13

Suffers severe health problems and becomes bedridden. Weight drops to around 60 pounds.

1914

Donates HK\$50,000 for two UK military planes and ambulances as the First World War starts.

Receives Order of the Excellent Crop, first of several honours from the Chinese Nationalist government.

1915

Made a Knight Bachelor by King George V, becoming one of the first Hong Kongborn people to gain a knighthood.

Donates money to the University of Hong Kong medical faculty.

1916

Honoured as one of the first five recipients of an honorary degree at the University of Hong Kong's first congregation.

1920

Founds Old Boys' Association for Queen's College, previously known as the Government Central School.

1922

Plays a leading role in settling seamen's strike for higher wages, a protest that is badly affecting the economy of Hong Kong.

1923

Meets Dr Sun Yat-sen in Hong Kong. Dr Sun was a leading figure in the 1911 overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in China and first president of the Republic of China (1911-1912).

Seeks to organise a "round table" conference to bring together Chinese warlords to discuss peace but fails in this attempt.

1924

Attends British Empire exhibition in London with wife Margaret and her silk-workers. Meets Queen Mary.

Featured as one of 200 personalities in the bilingual *Biographies of Prominent Chinese*.

1928

Buys *Kung Sheung Daily News*, a Chinese newspaper founded by the government and Chinese business elites during the 1925-1926 strike boycott in Hong Kong.

1929

Tries to organise another "round table" peace meeting to bring an end to hostilities among different Chinese groups.

1931

With the young Marshal Zhang Xueliang and son Robert S. L. at a charity fundraising opera in Beijing when the Mukden incident occurs, marking the start of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Holds a major celebration for the golden anniversary of his marriage to Margaret. Gives HK\$100,000 to both his wives as a celebratory gift.

1932

Grandson Robert Hung Ngai (Robert H. N.) born to son Robert S. L. and wife Hesta Hung.

1933

Travels to London for the World Economic Conference.

1936

Donates money for a plane for the Nationalist government and receives a large photograph of Chiang Kai-shek.

Invited to visit Nanking in May for an industrial exhibition and to discuss investment. Meets Chiang Kai-shek.

1938

Clara dies.

Granddaughter Margaret Min Kwan born, sister of Robert H. N.

1941

Provides his reflections of life in Hong Kong for the Centenary Talks radio broadcasts, commemorating the territory's 100 years under British administration.

Gathers family from different parts of the world to celebrate his and Margaret's diamond wedding anniversary on 2 December. The event is reported to be the biggest event yet held at the Hong Kong Hotel. The toast is proposed by Governor Sir Mark Young.

Goes to neutral Macau to recover from the anniversary celebrations, just before the Japanese attack on Hong Kong on 8 December, drawing the city into the Second World War. Refuses to return despite entreaties (promises) by the Japanese.

1942

Spends the occupation of Hong Kong in seclusion at his Macau residence.

1944

While still in Macau, Margaret dies in Hong Kong.

1945

Following the Japanese surrender, invited to return to Hong Kong on the launch of British military government commander Admiral Cecil Harcourt, accompanied by

young grandson Robert H. N.

1946

Composes the address of welcome for returning British governor Sir Mark Young at Government House.

1948

Donates HK\$1 million to build Lady Ho Tung Hall women's hostel at the University of Hong Kong in memory of Margaret.

1949

Goes on a world tour, aged 86. Meets French president and writer George Bernard Shaw.

Loses Shanghai property portfolio after the Chinese Communist Party wins control of the country.

1952

Celebrates 90th birthday.

1953

Ho Tung Technical School for Girls founded following a donation of HK\$200,000.

1955

Granted second knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II. Becomes a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE), flying to the UK and attending the ceremony at Buckingham Palace on a wheelchair.

1956

Passes away at the age of 93 at Idlewild. Buried next to Margaret in the Protestant Cemetery in Happy Valley in Hong Kong.

Grandmother

Lady Margaret Ho Tung

1865

Margaret Mak Sau-ying born to Hector Coll Maclean, who works for Jardine, Matheson & Co., one of Hong Kong's leading hongs, and Ng Ukn.

1870s

Attends primary school in Hong Kong and learns to read and write in Chinese.

Strictly brought up and feet bound. Always told to adopt good posture and behave properly at meals. Later teaches grandson Robert Hung Ngai (Robert H. N.) in a similar manner.

1881

Margaret marries Robert Ho Tung. She brings a dowry of two properties.

Late 1880s

Adopts eldest son of Robert Ho Tung's younger brother, as she and Robert fail to conceive a child of their own. The boy goes on to become compradore of Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank.

1891

Madam Chow Yee-man becomes a concubine to Robert Ho Tung to start a family but only bears one daughter Mary (1900).

1894

Margaret's father dies, leaving his assets to Robert Ho Tung (will executor), not his daughter.

Margaret arranges for her first cousin, Clara Cheung Lin-kok, to marry her husband as neither she nor the concubine has had a child. Unusually, the marriage agreement stipulates that Clara should be treated equally as a co-wife (*ping tsai*).

1897

Robert Ho Tung buys plot on 8 Seymour Road for HK\$14,000. When the 125,000-square-foot residence is built, it is called Idlewild and becomes Margaret's main home. Family festivals and celebrations are held there.

1900

Attends inaugural meeting of the campaign to stop foot-binding in Hong Kong with Clara.

c.1910

Creates Tung Ying Hok Po farming complex in the Kwu Tung area of the New Territories for family retreats and puts her interest in experimental agriculture into practice. Particular expertise is developed in silkworms and dwarf mulberry bushes, with the help of specialists from the Shunde area of China.

1915

Becomes publicly known as Lady Margaret Ho Tung after her husband's knighthood.

1924

Requested by the Hong Kong government to provide a demonstration by her silk-workers at the British Empire Exhibition in London. It proves popular and is visited by Queen Mary.

1931

Golden Anniversary celebrations held at Idlewild, with family members in attendance. Receives HK\$100,000 gift from Sir Robert to commemorate the

anniversary and donates the money to the Hong Kong government to build a clinic near Kam Tsin and HK\$10,000 to Po Leung Kuk.

1932

Grandson (Robert H. N.) born.

1941

Celebrates Diamond Wedding Anniversary on 2 December. A second "wedding" ceremony is held at Idlewild, similar to the marriage service 60 years earlier. A few days later, the Japanese attack Hong Kong, drawing the city into the Second World War.

Hong Kong is captured by the Japanese on 25 December. Sir Robert spends the war in Macau. Margaret remains at Idlewild, where she and the rest of the household, including grandson Robert H. N., are secluded in the basement while the rest of the house is occupied by Japanese officers.

1942

Daughter-in-law Hesta Hung escapes to China with children Robert H. N. and his sister.

During the Japanese occupation, Margaret allows neighbours to use water from a spring/well in the Idlewild courtyard when supplies run low elsewhere. She also seeks to protect those in her household, especially women, from the Japanese soldiers.

1943

Visits Macau in 1943 to see her husband and stays for several weeks before returning to look after family matters. Soon after, she becomes ill.

1944

Margaret passes away in Hong Kong. She has become a Christian shortly before her

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death and is buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Happy Valley in Hong Kong.

1946

After Sir Robert returns from Macau, a memorial service for Margaret is held at Idlewild.

1947

Posthumous honours granted for her agricultural research work and services to public health.

1951

Lady Ho Tung Hall at the University of Hong Kong named for Margaret after a donation by Sir Robert.

Grandmother

Lady Clara Ho Tung

1875

Clara Cheung Ching-yung, aka Cheung Lin-kok, is born in Hong Kong to Cheung Tak-fai and Cheung Yeung-shi. One of Clara's grandfathers is Thomas Lane, who founded Lane Crawford department store in Hong Kong.

1880s

Brought up as a devout Buddhist and Confucian from an early age.

1892

Father dies in Jiu Jiang, China. To help the grieving process, Clara teaches herself to read and write. She discovers the joys of learning and education becomes a life-long interest.

c.1893

Clara and her family return to Hong Kong and settle there with the help of Margaret Mak, Clara's cousin and Robert Ho Tung's wife.

1895

Marries Robert Ho Tung. Relationship arranged by Margaret, due to her inability to have children. The agreement is that Clara should be treated equally as a co-wife (ping tsai).

1897

Clara's first daughter Victoria Jubilee born.

1898

First son Henry born. Twenty months later, the child dies of pneumonia, causing lasting sadness.

Over the next 16 years, Clara bears eight more children: six daughters and two sons. Daisy (1899), Edward (1902), Eva (1903), Irene (1904), Robert (1906), Jean (1908), Grace (1910), and Florence (1915).

1906

Moves to bungalows Dunford and The Chalet in the exclusive Peak district of Hong Kong. The Ho family is the first non-Europeans to own property in the area.

1910

Clara, who has deep knowledge and skill in nursing and medicine, cares for her husband during a prolonged and serious digestive illness lasting over three years.

1914

Several of the Ho children attend leading Diocesan Girls School. Clara believes in a good education for daughters as well as sons as this remains even if material gains are lost.

1915

Becomes publicly known as Lady Clara Ho Tung after her husband's knighthood.

1916

Begins her many expeditions to the sacred mountains of China and well-known Buddhist institutions.

1921-22

Daughters Irene and Eva are among the first female undergraduates to study at the University of Hong Kong.

1922

Starts to promote Buddhism in Hong Kong through arranging lecture series by

venerables.

1927

The construction of The Falls on the Peak is completed as Clara's main residence.

1929

Goes on a pilgrimage to India and Burma with youngest daughter Florence.

1930

Inspired by visits to Dr Barnardo's Homes in the UK to set up Po Kok Free School in Causeway Bay in Hong Kong, and a school by the same name in Macau, to assist girls born into poverty and to help more people understand Buddhism.

1931

Given HK\$100,000 by Sir Robert to celebrate his golden wedding anniversary to Lady Margaret. Clara uses the money to build a landmark Buddhist temple on Hong Kong Island.

1932

Founds Po Kok Buddhist Seminary for girls at Castle Peak in the New Territories and starts Light of Humankind Buddhist magazine for local and international readers.

Grandson Robert Hung Ngai (Robert H. N.) born.

Mid-1930s

Publishes *Travelogue on Famous Mountains*, recording her journeys to China's sacred mountains. She also records her reminiscences in *Reflections of Sixty Years*, written by assistant Lam Ling-chun. The manuscript is lost during the Second World War.

Tung Lin Kok Yuen Buddhist temple, built in Chinese and Western styles and named after Sir Robert and Clara, is completed in Happy Valley, where it remains today. Clara serves as founding superintendent.

1937

Becomes heavily involved in support activities and fund-raising in Hong Kong for China in the war against Japan together with wives of senior Chinese officials.

1938

Clara dies after an asthma/bronchial attack and from exhaustion. People report seeing a light at the moment of her passing.

Large-scale public funeral draws thousands. Clara is buried at Chiu Yuen cemetery in Hong Kong. She leaves a will that donates most of her estate to Tung Lin Kok Yuen.

Commemorative Chinese gateway constructed at The Falls. The gateway lintel carries the words Ho Tung Gardens, the name by which the property is subsequently known.

Parents

General Robert Ho Shai-lai and Hesta Hung Ki-fun

1906

Robert Ho Shai-lai (Robert S. L.) is born in Hong Kong, the third son of Robert Ho Tung and Clara Cheung Lin-kok. His oldest brother dies in infancy; a second older brother survives.

1914

After early home tutoring with other members of the family in Chinese and English, he attends school with his sisters.

1916

Transfers to Queen's College (formerly Government Central School), attended by his father and other male family members.

1924

Tries to join the famous Baoding Military Academy in Nanking, China. When he finds outs that the Academy has closed, he applies for military training in the UK.

1925

Briefly attends the University of Hong Kong.

Starts army training at Woolwich Military Academy in the UK. His father's friend and former Hong Kong colonial secretary James Stewart Lockhart becomes his UK guardian.

1926

Finishes course at Woolwich. Insists on wearing Chinese army uniform rather than the British uniform of all his UK classmates on official occasions.

Starts tank training in the UK. Causes scandal over application for a Chinese passport and renunciation of British nationality due to sensitivities over his military knowledge. His training is halted.

Secures commission from father's acquaintance Marshal Zhang Zuolin, a warlord who controls northeast China, to facilitate admission to study at the L'Ecole d'Application d'Artillerie at Fontainebleau, France.

1928

Marries Hesta Hung Ki-fun at a major society celebration in Hong Kong.

1930

Joins Chinese army led by Zhang's son, Zhang Xueliang, also known as the Young Marshal, in northeast China. They become lifelong friends.

1931

In Beijing, with his father and the Young Marshal, at a Chinese opera charity performance when the Mukden incident takes place, heralding the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Given his multilingual capabilities, assigned to take the League of Nations delegation to Shanghai to probe cause of the Chinese-Japanese conflict.

1932

Becomes an artillery battalion commander. Accompanies foreign military observers at frontline during Japanese attack on Shanghai. Promoted to lieutenant-colonel.

First and only son Robert Hung Ngai (Robert H. N.) born in Hong Kong.

Works on resistance to the Japanese in the northeast with the Young Marshal.

Takes leave to attend graduate training at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Many US classmates become senior military figures in the Second World War, including the China arena. This paves the way for Robert S. L. to play a cross-cultural bridging role.

1936

Assigned to military intelligence work and participates in anti-communist campaigns in Shaanxi.

In Hong Kong when the Young Marshal kidnaps Chiang Kai-shek, the political and military leader of China's Nationalists, in Xian to bring together the Chinese Communist and Nationalist armies to fight the Japanese, not each other. Chiang is eventually released and the Young Marshal arrested.

1937

Transferred to look after salt matters in Guangzhou while under investigation in relation to the Xian incident, given his close association with the Young Marshal.

1938

Mother Clara dies.

Sent to the frontline and engages in battles using his artillery expertise in Anhui, Henan and Jiangxi as the Japanese advance. Later assigned to military intelligence in southern China.

First and only daughter Margaret Min Kwan born.

1941

Transferred to Liuzhou, Guangxi, under the command of Nationalist general Fakui Zhang.

Does not attend diamond wedding anniversary of his father and Margaret in early December, incurring much displeasure. Family lore suggests this was due to his knowledge of the impending Japanese invasion of Hong Kong on 8 December and the danger his presence would pose to other family members.

1942

Hesta looks after Robert H. N. and his sister in Hong Kong in the early days of the Japanese occupation. The trio later use false IDs, to make their escape to China and reunite with Robert S. L.

Assigned a logistics role that involves interaction with US forces and overseas supplies. Also appointed to the Nationalists' prestigious Military Commission.

1944

Builds close connections with former Leavenworth graduate General Albert Wedemeyer, now in charge of US support in China. Works in Kunming, where US General Claire Chennault, of "Flying Tigers" fame, is based. Deals effectively with increasing US aid and promoted to lieutenant general logistics bureau deputy commander.

Meets President Chiang Kai-shek for the first time.

1945

Following the Japanese collapse, marches troops from Liuchow to Guangdong. Becomes one of the first Nationalist commanders to reach Guangzhou and plays a major role in maintaining order and the Japanese surrender.

Awarded Legion of Merit by the US government.

1946

Organises supply points from Qinhuangdao and Hulutao ports for hundreds of thousands of Nationalist troops as the civil war between the Chinese Communists and Nationalists resumes. As commander of Hulutao, he is also responsible for the

humanitarian repatriation of more than one million Japanese from northeast China over a period of three years.

1947

Honoured with the Medal of Freedom, Silver Palm, by the US government.

1949

Appointed commander of Keelung Harbour in Taiwan, in addition to other duties related to the Nationalists' retreat to Taiwan.

1950

Chiang Kai-shek assumes presidency of Taiwan. Robert S. L. is made a vice minister of defence and head of Taiwan's delegation to Japan, just ahead of the outbreak of war in Korea. Serves as trusted liaison to organise a secret visit to Taiwan by General Douglas MacArthur, who is overseeing the US occupation and rebuilding of postwar Japan. US economic and military aid to Taiwan resumes.

1953

Appointed Taiwan's chief representative to the United Nations' Military Staff Committee and is based in Washington DC during the early cold war years.

1956

Father Sir Robert passes away at Idlewild. Robert S. L. inherits ownership of the Kung Sheung Daily News and Kung Sheung Evening News.

1957

Older brother Edward dies suddenly in Hong Kong. Ho family businesses run remotely by Robert S. L. as he continues to work on US-Taiwanese relations.

1958

Major Taiwan Strait military crisis with China puts Taiwan on a war footing. Robert S.

L. called on to use his US network and trusted relationship with senior US military personnel to secure advanced eight-inch grenade launchers. He accomplishes this and the weapons are deployed, helping to end the conflict.

1959

Promoted to the rank of general.

1962

Resigns from his United Nations role due to the pressing need to look after his part of the family estate. He remains attached to the Taiwan government and President Chiang Kai-shek in a senior advisory capacity.

Returns to Hong Kong to manage *Kung Sheung Daily News* and other family businesses and philanthropies, but still regularly visits Taiwan.

Takes up residence at Ho Tung Gardens when in Hong Kong. Over the years, he meets numerous dignitaries there, including George H.W. Bush in the 1970s, when Bush was chief of the US Liaison Office in China.

1967

Uses military training to shield *Kung Sheung* newspaper staff and building from violent confrontation during anti-colonial riots in Hong Kong.

1975

Attends Chiang Kai-shek's funeral.

1977

Awarded Order of the Brilliant Star, First Rank, a civilian honour, for his contribution to Taiwan.

Closes *Kung Sheung* newspaper, just ahead of the signing of the Joint Declaration between China and the UK on Hong Kong's post-1997 future when China is to resume sovereignty.

Mid-1980s

Retires and lives alternately in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Carries on his parents' horticultural endeavours with a tea estate in Taiwan and vegetables grown on "prime Hong Kong real estate" at Ho Tung Gardens.

1991

Hesta unexpectedly passes away.

1995

Attends a reception marking the 50th anniversary of victory over Japan together with officials from China.

1996

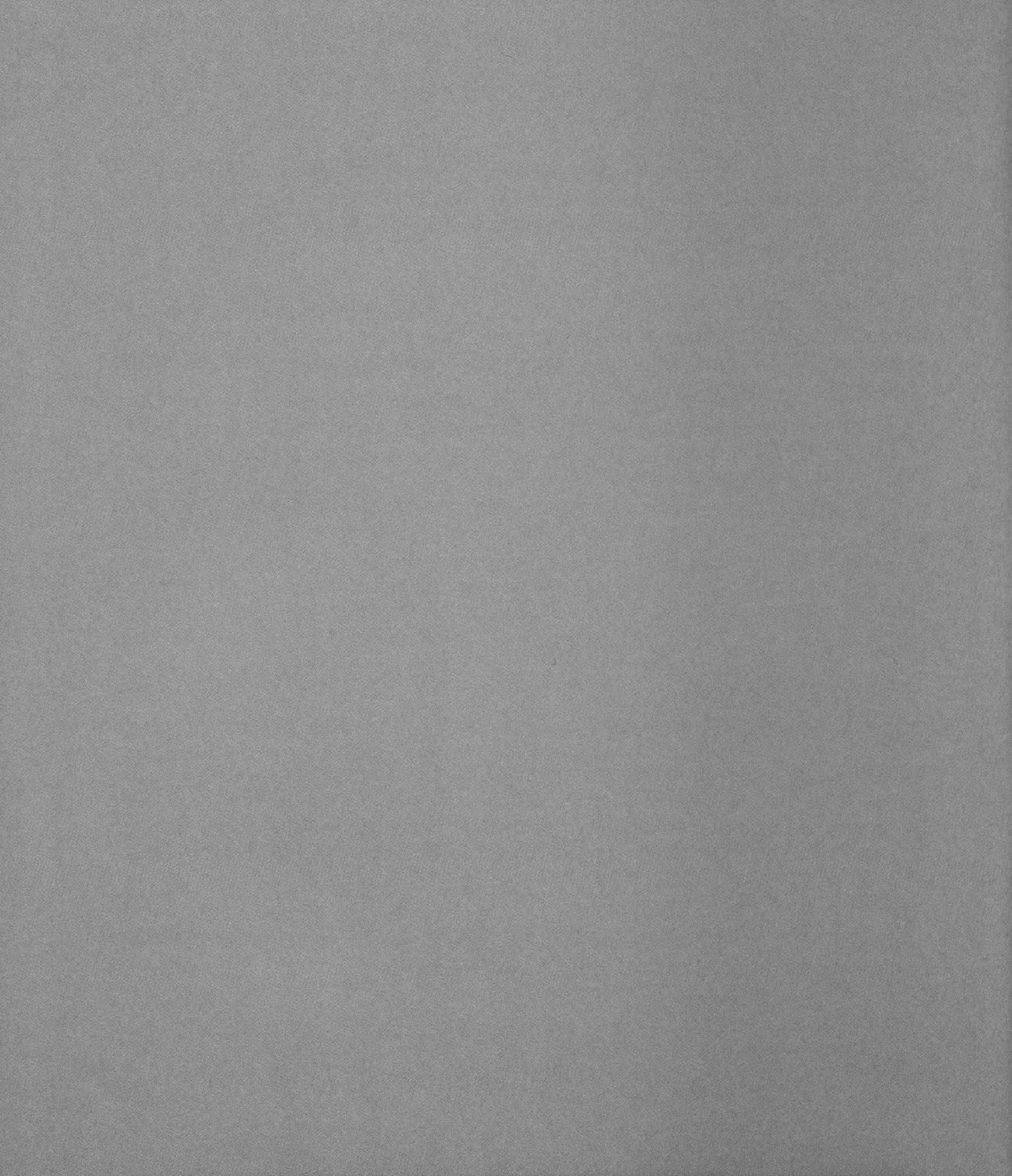
Still playing tennis at 90.

1998

After donating money to Northeastern University, China, makes first trip back to that region in decades. Dies at Ho Tung Gardens shortly after his return. Funeral in Hong Kong attended by senior community figures from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. A Taiwan flag is sent over but not draped. His ashes are buried at Chiu Yuen cemetery.

2009

Commemorative plaque to Robert S. L. unveiled in the George H.W. Bush Gallery of the National Museum of the Pacific War in Texas, US.



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